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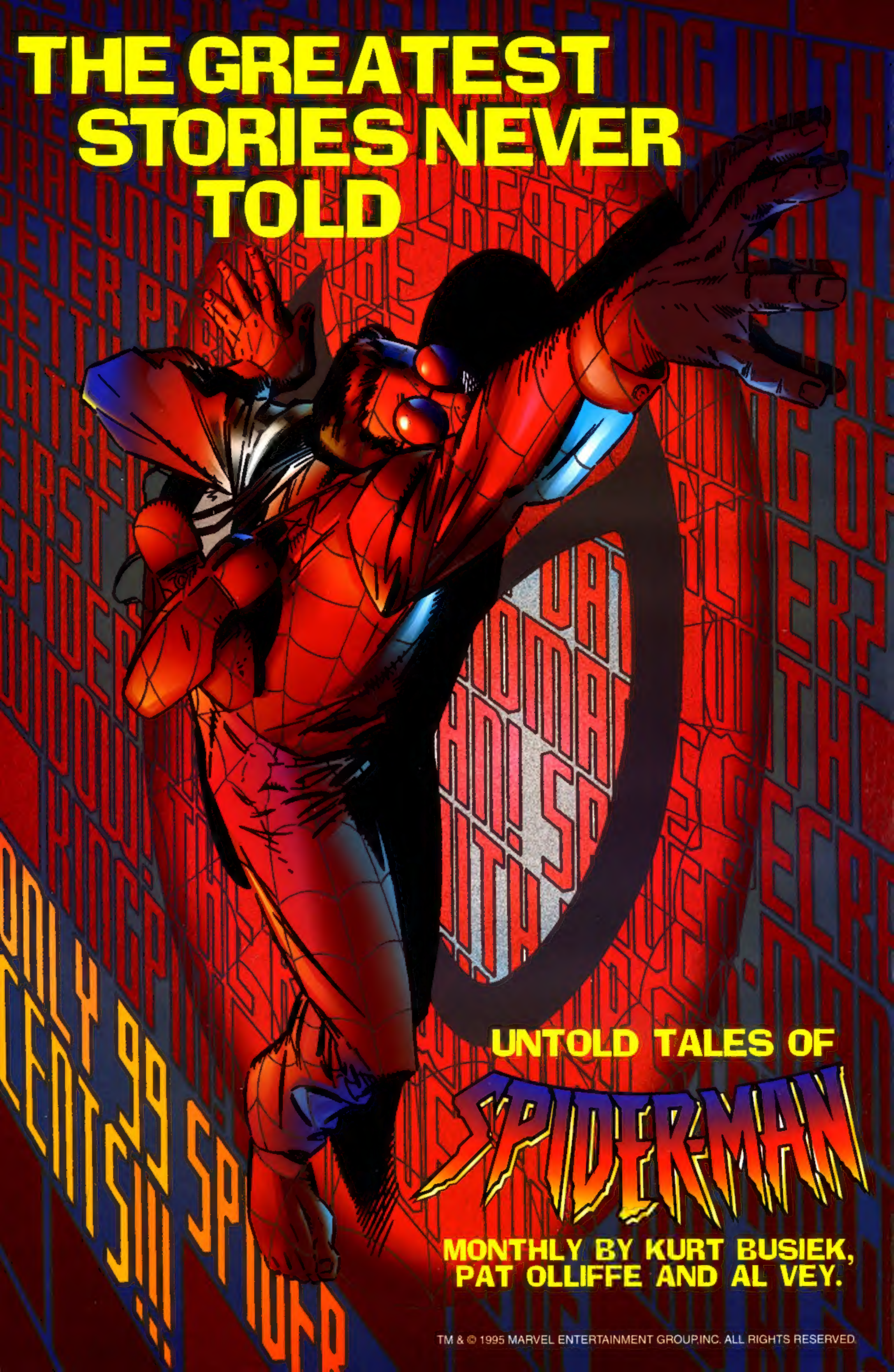
MARVEL
VISION
THE MARVEL FAN MAGAZINE

MARVEL COMICS VERSUS DC

Ron Wagner • Chuck Dixon
Warren Ellis • Dan Jurgens
Creating Comics • Artist Against Artist • X-Nation 2099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MARVEL VISION #1
JANUARY 1996

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Editorial Espousals

Welcome to the first issue of **MARVEL VISION**. With a magazine as cool as this I'd usually let the book do the talking and I'd shut up. However, if there's one thing that Fabian Nicieza and I share other than an ever expanding runway for pigeons on our head is the "Gab Factor." So sit back and absorb the torrent of info I'm about to toss your way!

This magazine will be your guide to the wide world that is Marvel Entertainment. Inside these glossy pages you will find what is hot, hip and happening to your favorite comic book heroes. Information on comics, trading cards, toys, movies and films are all here. There's a lot going on in the Marvel Universe these days and you're going to need the coolest guide-book to it.

Inside, you'll not only get insider info, but lots of other cool stuff. One feature we're particularly proud of is the **Artist vs. Artist!** Marvel Art Director and resident in-house living legend, **John Romita** goes head to head against one of those new, young punk artists of today. Who do we pit him against in his first outing? His own son, **John Romita, Jr.**! Sketch books on new Marvel titles will abound. This issue we'll spotlight the fantastic work of **Humberto Ramos** on the new 2099 book, **X-NATION 2099**. For all you revisionists out there, another feature will have the hot artists of today going back to the '60's to help create the heroes that you love now. This issue, ***Batman*** artist **Kelley Jones** grapples with an orange-hued cosmic ray victim. **Malibu's ULTRAVERSE** has a problem in the shape of the cosmic avatar **Phoenix.** Red-hot writer/artist **Dan Jurgens** talks about **SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN**. Tantalizing bits of gossip on toys and other goodies will also be included..

Posters, inserts, you name it we'll have it. **X-MEN, FANTASTIC FOUR, SIREN, GHOST RIDER, PUNISHER, CABLE, SPIDER-MAN, CAPTAIN AMERICA, RUNE, THOR, GREEN GOBLIN, PRIME** and the rest of the Marvel/Malibu/Toy Biz Universes are all here. Right Here!

After you've perused these pages, we hope you get just as excited about the world of comics as we did when putting this magazine together.

We want to hear from you.

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See 'ya in the funny books.

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Stan Lee

IN JANUARY 1996, MARVEL WILL BEGIN CELEBRATING ITS THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR OF COMIC BOOK JOURNEYS INTO THE REALMS OF WONDER AND HEROIC EXPLOITS. SO, WE THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE NONE BETTER TO TELL THE TALES OF THOSE THIRTY-FIVE YEARS THAN THE MAN WHO WAS THERE AT THE VERY BEGINNING...

They're scorned, shunned and misunderstood because they're different from "normal" society. Who among us cannot relate to that?

Has it really been 35 years since the start of the Marvel Age of Comics? To me it doesn't feel a day longer than 34!

Y'know, life is funny. When I first wrote that phrase, "The Marvel Age of Comics," I meant it as a gag, an advertising slogan, a gimmick. I never expected that it would become an accepted part of the language of comicdom, indeed of literature itself! I never expected that "The Marvel Age of Comics" would be the definitive description of a period in time when comic books first began their ascent towards world-wide acceptance and the burgeoning readership of college students and adults.

And what an age it's been! Readers everywhere agree it was the creation of mighty Marvel that led to the proliferation of comic book stores, comic book fandom, comic book conventions, and quality magazines (such as the one you now so passionately clutch in your eager, grateful hands) devoted solely to the art and craft of comic books themselves.

Yes, a lot has happened since The Marvel Age of Comics burst upon the literary landscape with the impact of a raging tornado. Since you and I will be sharing these pandemonious pages together for the next few minutes, what say we take a look at some of the highlights of those first 35 years — and let's do it fast before I forget 'em!

Perhaps the most important single event in Marvel history was the creation of The Fantastic Four, because that's the title that started it all; it was the first of the luminous line of legendary super heroes destined to take the comic book world by storm. It was also the first in which any publisher actually dared to print "The World's Greatest Comic Book" on the cover — and we kept it there, justifiably, for more than three decades!

What was so special about the FF? Perhaps it was the fact that the heroes didn't have secret identities, or that the members of the team actually argued among themselves, and the obligatory teenage hero would rather swing with his sweety or tune up his beloved Corvette than battle suepr-villains. Or maybe it was because the awesome adventures took place in the magical melting pot that was Manhattan, New York, and not some fictitious Metropolis or Gotham City. Yes sir, Jolly Jack Kirby and I had a ton of fun trying to inject as much realism as possible in the most far-out yarns of all. And you can't imagine how many letters we received from readers saying they intended to visit New York, wanting to know where they could find the FF's Baxter Building headquarters! In fact, I sometimes think we should have built a Baxter Building and made it a world-famous tourist attraction. But hey, there's always next year!

Another highlight of the past 35 years has to be the creation of The Incredible Hulk. Everyone thought Jack and I were crazy when we launched ol' green skin, and they were probably right. "How can you make a hero out of a monster?" people bellowed every chance they got. Of course, to me he was never a monster; he was simply a large, green hued individual who resembled a spokesman for steroids and was afflicted by an unusual attitudinal problem. The recent Peter David run of Hulk strips has been like a shot in the arm for our raging rampager. The dazzling Mr. David has managed to inject his own inimatable brand of humor into the highly dramatic and action-packed tales with which he has succeeded in captivating an entire new generation of Hulk fans. And, long-time readers who stray back to the fold might be astonished to learn that our hulking hero is mentally no longer one brick short of a load. Fact is, he could now probably hold his own in a debate with Reed Richards, and if he ever gives up squashing bad guys, he could probably get accepted by Mensa!

As for the artwork, if you compare the way the Hulk is drawn today to the way he was drawn at the start of the series, or with any of the different artists' versions that followed, you'll see that maniacal Marvel has never been famous for its immutable consistency! Call me an anachronism if you will, but I still prefer the original Hulk as drawn by Jolly Jack in the early sixties.

To me, another highlight of Marvel's first 35 years was the creation of The Mighty Thor. In trying to come up with a new type of super hero, one who'd be even stronger than our others, a sudden thought hit me — ain't nothin' more powerful than a god! That's when the fun came in; which god would it be? The better known gods of legend were the Greek and Roman gods, but we opted for something a little more offbeat, the colorful Norse gods. I was intrigued by the idea of Odin having two sons, the noble Thor and the evil Loki. The more we researched the Norse legends, the more enthusiastic we became. The fun we could have with the gigantic storm giants, the deadly trolls and the murderous fire demons! What suspense we could provide with the threat of the dreaded day of Ragnarok! What drama we could offer with the towering spires of Asgard, the mystical Rainbow Bridge to Earth, the Valkyrie warriors and, most of all, the enchanted hammer of Thor — not to mention the most colorful cast of characters ever assembled, including Balder the Brave, the stunning Sif, the voluminous Volstagg, Hogun the Grim, Fandral the Dashing, Heimdall who could hear the fluttering of a butterfly's wings from across another galaxy, Hela the goddess of Death, Karnilla the Norn Queen, and — but I suspect you get the idea!

Was Thor a good choice for us? Well, here's a clue. It's Marvel's first title to reach its 500th issue! Five hundred! That's half a thousand! Not bad for a long-haired guy with wings on his helmet, eh?

Speaking of "not bad," how about Daredevil, The Man Without Fear? Everyone said we were crazy; we couldn't pull it off; it would never work; no one could do a series about a blind super hero. Well, that was all we had to hear! Nobody likes a challenge better than a Marvel madman. So I rolled up my sleeves, called the brilliant creator of The Sub-Mariner, Big Bill Everett, and we decided to prove we could do the impossible. Not only was our hero's sightlessness a watershed development in comics, but we didn't want to go the usual route of making him a detective, cop or reporter. It was determined that Matthew Murdock would be more cerebral, more realistic, more unique; he'd be an attorney-at-law, plying his trade in New York City along with the rest of our garrulous group of costumed cavorters.

Like so many of our heroes, the passing years have brought numerous changes in the life of Matt Murdock. One of the most spectacular was wrought more than a decade ago when the fabulous Frank Miller took over Daredevil's art and scripting chores. Frank's stories explored the darker, deeper, more tragic side of our handicapped hero, while giving us a new unforgettable heroine/villainess in the person of Elektra, a female who was destined to alter and affect the life of Matt Murdock in such a way that his series would never be quite the same again. Yes, as was the case with so many of our superhero stars, whenever a top-flight artist and/or writer took over the series for a period of time, that talented individual usually left an imprimatur upon the strip which fandom would never forget.

But not all our Marvel heroes were created in the early '60's. Three of them were revived from the late '30's and '40's. Those three were The Human Torch, The Sub-Mariner, and Captain America. They were my favorite trio when I was a kid, and I couldn't bear the thought of depriving later generations of the same enjoyment that I had experienced.

So it was that Jack Kirby and I took the name and the powers of The Human Torch from Carl Burgos' original version, but changed him to a teenager and incorporated him into The Fantastic Four, as we did with The Sub-Mariner. But I wanted to try something different with Captain America. I wanted to make him an Avenger.

It's funny the way these fictitious characters end up getting under your skin. There was no way Cap could simply be another Avenger. I knew going in that he'd have to end up as their leader. After all, he'd been a national icon for a quarter of a century. He was born to give orders, to lead, to command — and what a thrill it was to be working with Jolly Jack, one of Cap's original creators, as we brought our shield-slinging sentinel into the present and gave him the fame and acclaim which had always been his due.

But no overview of the past 35 years would be complete without mentioning the series that has taken all of comicdom by storm, the best-selling comicbook series of all! Of course I'm referring to none other than the X-citing, X-uberant, X-travagant, X-traordinary X-MEN!

Hardly a day goes by when someone doesn't ask me, "How do you account for the X-Men's incredible popularity?" To me, the answer is simple. So much of their own hangups and traumas reflect what's happening in today's society and to today's young people. Think about it. The X-Men are mutants; they're scorned, shunned and misunderstood because they're different from "normal" society. Who among us cannot relate to that? What teenager hasn't at some time or other felt out of things, alienated from the adult world? What members of minority races, minority religions, minority nationalities haven't experienced the intolerance of others. Reading the X-Men is like reading about the world as it might be if the bigots and the hatemongers ever gain power. Sure, the pages are filled with action and fantasy, danger and romance, but underling each and every tale is one of the most important philosophical problems of the day — how can we learn to recognize intoleranc, and if ever we do, does mankind have the ability — and the dedication to destroy it forever?

Unique in all the realm of comics, the X-Men seem to have created a world unto themselves, a world of ever increasing heroes and villains, characters that become so popular in their own right that the fans continue to overwhelm us with demands that each be given his or her own title! Ever since the unforgettable run of X-Men sagas written by the charismatic Chris Claremont, the X-Men have been #1 in sales throughout the nation and today, under the extraordinary editorship of Bob Harras, Marvel's majestic mutants are probably the best-selling comicbook title in the entire world!

Yes, its's been a great 35 years since Marvel first burst upon the comicbook scene. Trying to list all the achievements of The House of Ideas would take up this entire magazine, and we still wouldn't have covered everything. Perhaps a future issue will have space for us to explore The Avengers, Iron Man, Dr. Strange, Nick Fury Agent of Shield, The Silver Surfer, and of course, the most famous of all — The Amazing Spider-Man! Ol' Spidey would surely need an entire article of his own — and you can bet it won't be long in coming!

Well, that wraps it up for now, but hang around, willya? I wouldn't want you to miss the next 35 years because, as all true believers know, the best lies just ahead!

Excelsior! Stan

News bits

The best in the biz take a shot at the old rampaging Hulk in the 64-page one-shot, THE SAVAGE HULK! Sporting a butt-whomping cover by Adam Kubert and Simon Bisley, stars like Sam Kieth, Scott Lobdell, Dave Gibbons, Michael Golden, Peter David, Jeph Loeb, William Messner-Loebs, Matt Wagner, and Tim Sale offer a look at their take on the emerald behemoth. The carnage begins on November 28th.

When gamma-spawned monsters go berserk and vigilantes go on killing sprees, one man is called upon to put an end to their madness. Everyone's favorite green-haired Sigmund Freud finally gets his own limited series and a chance to flex some muscle. DOC SAMSON #1 makes a house call on November 21st to deliver some psycho analysis, and if that doesn't work, a good old-fashioned right cross will do. Deranged Dan Slott, critical Ken Lashley and terminal Tom Wegrzyn recommend a healthy dose of DOC SAMSON #1.

The world of 2099 greets new denizens to the future, the one and only Fantastic Four! Reed, Sue, Ben and Johnny step out of the Negative Zone and into brand-new adventures in 2099 GENESIS #1 and their own new title, FANTASTIC FOUR 2099 #1! Both books will make their debut November 28th sporting chromium covers. FANTASTIC FOUR 2099 #1 will be a 32-page book with no ads featuring the work of Karl Kesel, Rick Leonardi and Al Williamson. 2099 GENESIS will be a 48-page one-shot with Warren Ellis, Humberto Ramos and Scott Koblish lending their talents. Bonus: look for a sneak peek in 2099 GENESIS at the new book set to debut in January, X-NATION 2099!

THE PHOENIX RESURRECTION

"The Phoenix Resurrection" hits Malibu Comics' Ultraverse in November as a 7-part saga featuring Marvel's hot X-Men characters. The chapters will run as a flip-cover serial throughout all 7 November Ultraverse titles: The All New Exiles, Mantra, The Night Man, Prime, Rune, Siren and UltraForce
Ian Edginton of X-Men 2099 is writing the serial with art by Bryan Hitch(X-Men Alpha), John Royle (Wolverine), Chuck Wojtkiewicz (Justice League Of America), Randy Green (Cable), Brian Murray (Supreme), and Paul Pelletier (Green Lantern). Expect to see Marvel's Wolverine, Gateway, Beast and Hellstorm, along with cameo appearances by Thor and the new Spider-Man.

DISNEY'S TOY STORY, the first full-length computer-animated feature film, comes to the printed page in the official comic adaption by Marvel. Each panel in the book is taken straight out of the movie showcasing the film's intricate 3-D visuals. Look for it in stores on November 21st, just in time for Thanksgiving.

Spider-Man gets his webs tangled with his future counterpart in SPIDER-MAN/SPIDER-MAN 2099, a 48-page bookshelf comic also on the stands November 7th. Christening the first team-up between a modern-day hero and a 2099 character, the web wonders will have to contend with the fearsome fury of Venom and Vulture 2099. SPIDER-MAN 2099 creators, Peter David and Rick Leonardi, along with inker extraordinaire, Al Williamson, will be on hand to help our heroes get out of their sticky situations in this time-crossed epic.

The X-Men's future is revealed through Cable's past in X-MEN: ASKANI'SON #1, the sequel to THE ADVENTURES OF CYCLOPS AND PHOENIX! Scott Lobdell and Gene Ha reunite for this 4-issue limited series, detailing the last hope of humanity. Look for the special UV coated cover this December.

A mad Sabretooth runs wild in the streets of New York City! Creed breaks his silence and runs amok against the X-Men in SABRETOOTH SPECIAL #1! Scribe Fabian Nicieza and artist Gary Frank help Sabretooth take a bite out of the Big Apple in the SABRETOOTH SPECIAL #1, a 48-page, chromium-covered, mutant splatterfest out November 28th.

X news

X-FACTOR's getting a new facelift—but too bad it's not gonna be pretty. Exit Havok, Guido, and Wolfsbane and enter Sabretooth, Mystique, and Wildchild, three seemingly "reformed" villains—or *are* they? After Sabretooth's fiasco with the X-Men, can he ever redeem himself? Or does he even want to? Will X-Factor's leader, Forge, be able to keep both Mystique and Sabretooth in line? Or will they continue to be bad to the bone? Given the close ties that Sabretooth and Wildchild had during the "Age of Apocalypse", what will their relationship be like in our reality?

Writer Howard Mackie intends to play up these aspects of the new team as well as address each character's history. As Howard succinctly puts it, "I really want to focus on the interrelationships of the characters. There's such a wealth of history that exists for each one, and each character is connected to the others in one way or another. For instance, Mystique is someone who's been around for a long time, yet there are gaps in her history. We'll come to know some of those gaps, plus examine her relationship with both Sabretooth and Forge and what that will mean for (the X-Men's) Storm."

This darker, grittier X-Factor is one of the most appealing elements to the book's penciler, Steve Epting. "It's a book with an edge," according to Steve. "I see Mystique as a dark version of *Modesty Blaise*. The more I work with her the more cunning and mysterious she becomes and I try to convey that in my pencils. Sabretooth will be another unpredictable element when he joins the team. There'll always be a chance that something will go wrong with these two in the group."

"Ha-ha. Okay. This one's obvious. Quicksilver couldn't eat the Flash's dust fast enough if they were ever in a race."
"Yeah, well, take away Batman's utility belt in a battle with Captain America and whatta you got?"
"Uh, Moonknight?"
"Yeah? Well, Aquaman's a guppy compared to Namor."
MARVEL VERSUS DC!!!
MARVEL COMICS
VERSUS
DC
Or is that
"Yeah?
"Superman could whip the Hulk's butt if it weren't that Kryptonite was the same color as ol' Jade Jaws."
"And Wolverine makes Lobo look like Little Lulu. 'Main Man' indeed. Make that the Lame Man. Or better yet, Maimed Man."
Yeah? Yeah?
THEM'S NOT JUST FIGHTING WORDS ANYMORE!!!

MARVEL COMICS VERSUS DC — DC VERSUS MARVEL COMICS

MARVEL VERSUS DC!!! Or is that DC VERSUS MARVEL!!!

—Jim Krueger

To the fans and readers of Superman, SPIDER-MAN, UNCANNY X-MEN, Batman and all the other heroes in the DC and Marvel Universe, these same kind of arguments have been fought since the very beginning.

But they're not just words any longer, because beginning this December, the Marvel Universe will be pitted against the DC Universe in a battle so great, in a confrontation so cataclysmic, that each issue will be a bonafide bonanza of the greatest magnitude in epic hero-Versus-hero battles ever seen in either company's history. So while you catch your breath, here's an explanation.

The cosmic comic collision begins in December and continues through March in a new 4-issue Limited Series called "Marvel Versus DC." Or is that "DC Versus Marvel"? Each issue will have 32 pages of story and art featuring the scripting talents of Peter David and Ron Marz and will be penciled by Dan Jurgens and Claudio Castellini. But that's just part of the storyline. Within this crazy combobulation, you'll see Superman pitted against the Hulk; Spider-Man go head to head against Superboy (and we're not talking the clone here, well, at least, not the clone of Spider-Man); Captain America, the Sentinel of Liberty against the Dark Knight himself, Batman; Lobo against Wolverine, and Wonder Woman against Storm.

The cries have echoed throughout fandom for more than thirty years, yet your wishes, arguments and bloody noses have not gone for naught. Your pleas have finally reached the ears of DC and Marvel.

"It's clearly the most anticipated event that hasn't been announced yet," said the writer of the INCREDIBLE HULK, *Aquaman* and SPIDER-MAN 2099, Peter David. "You have no idea how often I've gone to conventions where a line of people were waiting to show me five pages of the Hulk beating the #$$%^@ out of Swamp Thing. Or Spider-Man being roasted by Superman's heat vision.

"Until now, the idea of Marvel Versus DC was something people could only dream of, because, of course, it was the one thing that no comic company had ever done before, or would ever dare do, or would ever agree to do. And now, these guys are going to go head-to- head. I guess you could say I'm part of something that's going to put the 'fan' back in fantasy. Well, maybe you don't want to say that."

However you want to say it, the important thing is that it's going to be said by the fans. The outcome of each of the battles, according to Marvel's own Mark Gruenwald, the Editor-In-Chief of the Marvel Heroes line, will be determined by the fans. At comic stores all over the country, fans will find "MARVEL VERSUS DC" or is that "DC VERSUS MARVEL"? voting ballots (along with a special 16-page preview). These voting ballots will be used to determine the outcome of each major battle. This means that the final outcome of who is stronger, the Hulk or Superman, is up to the fan him/herself. "That means that everyone who votes on these battles will be a part of history. A moment in which it is determined forevermore who is stronger, who is more powerful." The outcomes of these battles will appear in issue #3, which will also propel both DC and Marvel in a direction so mind-blowing, so awe-inspiring, that the last week in February will be unlike anything any fan has ever seen before.

Don't be fooled into thinking that's all there is to this epic. Fans will also get to see Aquaman Versus Namor, Silver Surfer Versus Green Lantern, Quicksilver Versus the Flash, Jubilee Versus Robin, Catwoman Versus Elektra and Thor Versus Captain Marvel (that's SHAZAM, the original Captain Marvel).

HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

As to just how this amazing crossover will come into existence, Ron Marz offers us the tip of the iceberg. An iceberg so large, it'll lead to a chilling conclusion suggesting the origin of life in both the Marvel and the DC Universes themselves.

There are, as Ron explains, beings so amazing, so awe-inspiring, as to never have been captured in the annals of comics before. Perhaps events have never warranted their involvement. Or perhaps, they've been tied up in other things too mind-numbing to disclose to fandom at this point in time. These beings have existed oblivious to the fans and to each other. And that ignorance has been compromised. Beginning in issue #1 of "DC VERSUS Marvel," or is that "Marvel VERSUS DC"?, we meet two cosmic giants alarmingly similar to each other. Ron didn't really want to give anything away, but we pulled out the Bat-thumbscrews and made him watch the "Howard The Duck" movie a couple of times and he spilled the truth like a stool pigeon.

Once, a long time ago, the Big Bang occurred. But unlike the theory that it created something out of nothing, the truth is much more terrible. For the Big Bang was in actuality a split in the cosmic consciousness. A

split so awful and wrenching in its explosion that over the millions of years thereafter, two universes developed instead of the one that previously existed. These two universes, which now exist side by side, evolved and were manipulated by the two new consciousnesses that were formed in the Big Bang. Now, after millions of years of being blind to the other's existence, they are finally aware of each other and...they want their opposite's universe.

These bitter rivals will pit their world's champions against each other to annex each other's world and resources. Along the way, they'll also be finding greater and greater similarities between their universes. Why do both universes have people able to run faster than the wind? Why do both universes have heroes from undersea continents? And why do both universes exist with pieces linking them to something else? Something that's remained unseen,
until now. The answer has been kept inside a giant vault that only the corporate bigwigs had access to. But the time has come. The truth is about to be revealed.

According to David's co-writer, Ron Marz, "I feel like a kid in a candy store with this whole project. This is obviously the best job in comics. And it's really an honor to be a part of it. The way Peter and I will be writing the four-part limited series is like this. I'll be writing issues #1 and 3 and Peter will write #2 and 4.

"One of the really exciting things for me is to put in all these little moments—like Dr. Strange and Starman comparing notes and having a chat in Strange's sanctum sanctorum. Or like having Steel and War Machine meet each other. Every moment of this project is cool. Every page gives you something you've never seen before. It's amazing."

Each issue features four chapters, two of which will be drawn by Dan Jurgens whose work on *Superman, Zero Hour,* and the brand- new SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN, makes him one of the most sought after artists (and writers) in the industry. The other two chapters will be drawn by a relatively new artist named Claudio Castellini. His art has been seen (and drooled over, making mint copies somewhat of a scarce commodity) as wraparound covers for recent issues of FANTASTIC FOUR UNLIMITED. According to Marz, who has just completed a 48-page one-shot with the Italian-born artist, "Castellini is going to have people going nuts. As soon as they see his stuff, they will know he will be the next big thing. He *is* the next big thing. If I had to make a list of artists who are the best in the field, he'd be at the top. When people see the SILVER SURFER, their jaws will literally hit the floor."

Inkers Joe Rubinstein of *Superman* and Paul Neary of EXCALIBUR and CAPTAIN AMERICA will share in the art chores of all four issues.

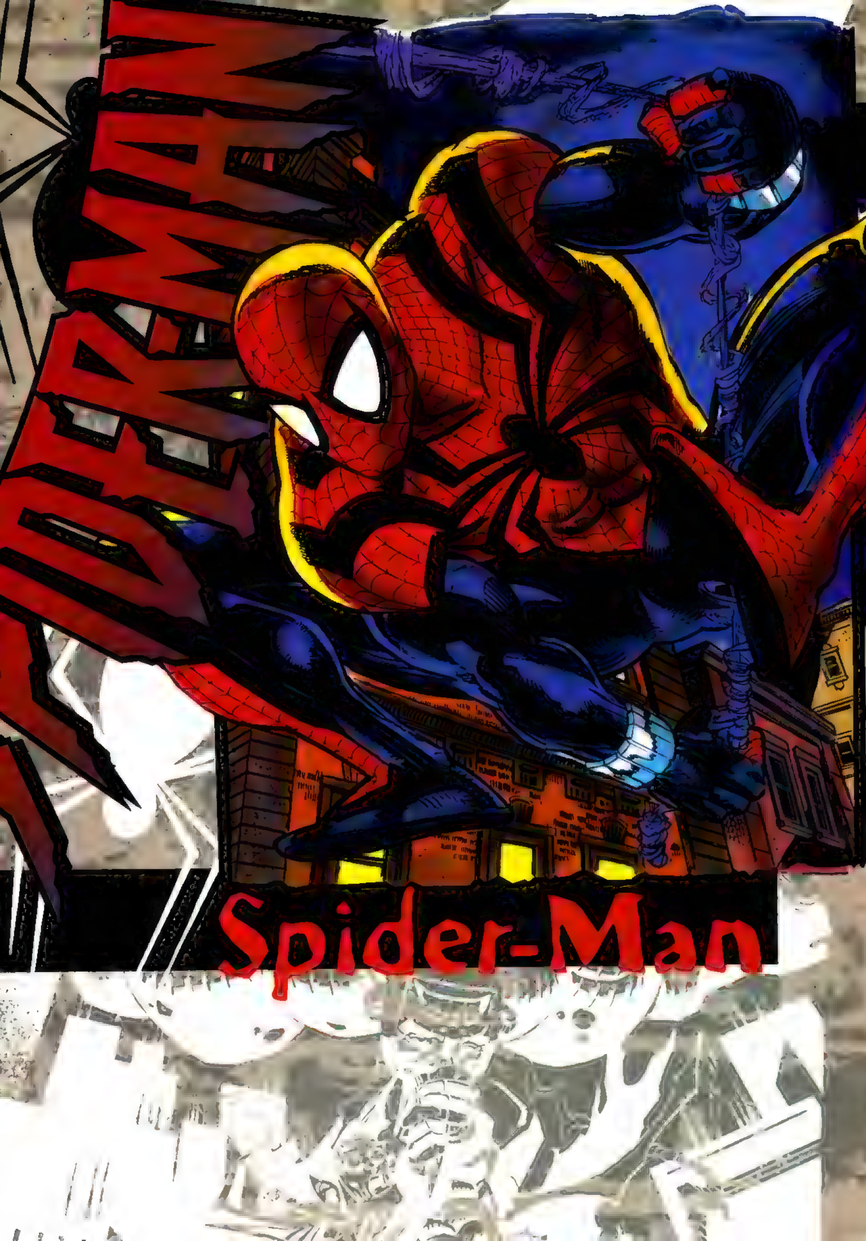
Marvel and DC will also be offering two special oversized 27" x 40" posters in commemoration of this battle to end all battles. Illustrated by Jurgens and Castellini, the posters feature the greatest heroes from each universe.

Of course, the rivalry between the DC and Marvel Universes isn't limited to just these four issues. DC Universe Executive Editor Mike Carlin said, "This is it—every reader's chance to let the world know DC's heroes are the coolest, most powerful heroes who've ever walked the Earth!"

Marvel Universe Editor-In-Chief Mark Gruenwald replied, "That Mike—such a kidder! Everyone knows any Marvel super hero can beat any three DC super heroes... and crack better jokes while doing it!"

So the question is, what's next? Where do we go after the epic battle is decided? After the melding of the Universes has run its course? After the fans have finally decided for all time, who is stonger? Well, the rumors and plans continue from there. There's talk of DC and Marvel exchanging some of their characters over the next year.

And while it may be a while before we see Matter Eater Lad takin on Galactus, hopefully "DC VERSUS MARVEL," or is that "MARVEL VERSUS DC"?, will have only whet your appetite for more.



DAN JURGENS: Climbing The Walls!

HE MADE HEADLINES BY KILLING THE MAN OF STEEL IN THE SUPERMAN TITLES, SET THE COMICS WORLD ABUZZ WHEN HE DESTROYED AND RECREATED THE DC UNIVERSE IN ZERO HOUR, AND TOOK FANDOM BY SURPRISE WHEN HE JUMPED ON BOARD TO LEND HIS TALENTS TO SOLAR, MAN OF THE ATOM FOR VALIANT. AND THESE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ACCLAIMED WRITER/ARTIST DAN JURGENS. NOW HE'S READY TO TACKLE THE NEXT HURDLE IN HIS DISTINGUISHED CAREER: PUTTING HIS MARK ON THE RECENTLY REVAMPED WALL-CRAWLING WONDER, SPIDER-MAN IN A BRAND-NEW ONGOING SERIES!

Mark Bernardo: Let's start with the general stuff. When and where were you born?

Dan Jurgens: I was born in 1959, in a very small community on the Minnesota/South Dakota border called Ortonville. It's only 2000 people, and I quite often refer to it as growing up in Smallville, because it's just like where Superboy grew up!

MB: Whoa! Already a DC reference in a Marvel Magazine! (Laughter) So what did you do before getting into comics? Any interesting jobs worth mentioning?

DJ: What did I do... My father owned a hardware store and I worked there from the time I was in about fifth grade. I worked as a disc jockey for a couple of years... then I went to art school, got my BFA, and very shortly after that, went to work for DC – another DC reference! – in about 1982, and have been doing comics ever since.

MB: How did you make that connection?

DJ: I was living in the Twin Cities at the time, and Mike Grell, who was writing *Warlord*, came to town, making a personal appearance at a local comics store. I stopped and showed him my work, and about a month or so later, I was the regular artist on *Warlord*!

MB: Wow!

DJ: Yeah, I was lucky. That was back when you didn't even start out with a monthly book. You did all the back-ups, fill-ins, and whatever... and I just hit the ground running with a monthly book right from day one. And I've never looked back.

MB: So Mike Grell was an influence?

DJ: Mike Grell was an influence, but here's another story you'll enjoy. When I was about fourteen, Walter Simonson had just started doing *Manhunter* for DC. I drew a Manhunter comic book and sent it in. Walter saw it, wrote me back a note saying, "Gee, I'm really flattered by this. I'd like to keep it and send a Manhunter drawing in exchange." So I said, "All right!!" and through the years, I corresponded with Walter. I'm sure I was a great pest, but he pointed out a lot of errors in my artwork, and gave me a lot of great tips. So I have to give equal credit to Walter and Mike Grell for helping me find my way in the door.

MB: Do you still have that drawing?

DJ: I still have that drawing! It's really nice, penciled and inked, full color. I've got it hanging on the wall of my studio. I guess Walter has also pulled out that comic I drew and embarrassed me with it. Jon Bogdanove told me he'd showed it to him once! (Laughter)

MB: So aside from Grell and Simonson, any other influences?

DJ: I think everybody has been an influence. I mean, the really obvious and easy ones are Neal Adams and Jack Kirby. Beyond that, I think you learn from everybody you look at. Sometimes you take away ideas of what not to do as well as what to do. Look at what John Byrne, for example, has done over the years; not only are you struck with the body of work, and the quality of the work, but just the idea that John was there, month in and month out on the books. And as a fan, I know that I responded to that. I think that's a mark of professionalism that everyone should strive for. When I've had to have a fill-in, and the kids come up to me and say, "I wish you would have done that issue!" I feel liked I've screwed them in a way, because I always felt that way as a reader myself.

MB: When did you first realize you wanted to write as well as draw?

DJ: I knew that right from the get-go. Even as a high school student, I've always liked creative writing. Even if I'd never drawn comics, I wouldn't have been surprised if I fell into writing somewhere down the line. Because I don't see myself as an artist, I don't see myself as a writer, I see myself as a storyteller. It seems to me that comic writers who don't get to draw their own work, at times must be terribly frustrated! I even find it frustrating writing for people when I don't draw. Not because I don't get a good product back, but just because I don't get to draw it!

MB: So, first on the *Superman* books, and now on the SPIDER-MAN books, you're one of a crew of writers who are telling a story across four different titles. Do you like to work this way?

DJ: There are pluses and minuses. The minuses are very obvious to some one who avoids such a writing exercise, and the main one is, the story is never completely your own. You don't get to write the beginning, middle, and end of a story yourself. There's no clear vision, and there's always a great danger that the vision becomes so compromised that it really dilutes the end product somehow. The benefits of working in a system like this are that you become sort of a team. There's always someone there who may have an idea better than yours. And you have the chance to get a creative synergy going where something really good can emerge. It opens up the possibilities of storytelling as much as it shuts some others down, frankly. Look at television writing; most shows are written, if not born, in a room with a team of writers working. It's not a new way to work at all.

MB: It just occurred to me... you are now simultaneoulsy writing the flagship characters of both Marvel and DC, which I don't believe anyone's ever done before.

DJ: There have been individuals who have done both, but I don't think simultaneously. I have been somewhat aware of that, yeah...

MB: So what can we expect to see from SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN, your new book?

DJ: What I'm trying to accomplish in it is a sense of fun, a sense of play, and a sense that Ben Reilly really has fun being Spider-Man. Despite the responsibility of it all, despite all the overwhelming bad stuff that has happened to him as a result of being Spider-Man, when he puts on the costume and swings through the city, it's fun for him to do it. And he wouldn't trade it for anything else in the world. We've gone through a period in comics where so many characters have gotten their powers and not wanted to be heroes, and I've always found that horribly depressing. When I created Booster Gold, he was a hero who wanted to be a hero. And that's what I like about both Superman and Spider-Man: they want to do what they're doing. And that's what I want to come through in these stories. If it's fun to be Spider-Man... it should also be fun to read about Spider-Man.

MB: How does it feel to be breaking that kind of ground?

DJ: It's cool. (Both laugh) Seriously, I've always said that being able to write such an iconoclastic character as Superman, there is a sense of honor associated with that, & I think of Spider-Man the same way. When you get to handle these characters, there is something special about them. I think they have to be treated with special concern; you have to be aware of what made them work in the first place, & you have to do something that adds to the legend rather than takes away from it.

MB: You've brought it back to something I've been wanting to get around to: what do you see as the major similarities and differences between Superman and Spider-Man?

DJ: There are some surface similarities. Traditionally, they both have that newspaper backdrop... after that, I see them much more in terms of their differences. Clark Kent, for all intents & purposes, is a very quiet, very stoic guy. I have always said that if you sum up Superman/Clark in one word, that word is integrity. With Peter Parker/Spider-Man, I'd say that one word is responsibility. & there is a big difference between the two. Ben (or Peter) is a much looser character.

Hey Dan is this the cover you were talking about?

He's somewhat more fun to write, just because of the patter of the dialogue. The character moves differently, as I'm finding out as I learn how to draw Spidey. The differences are what makes it fun to write. I don't think I could go out & write another book just like Superman. Because then I'd be repeating myself & that's not fun.

MB: So, by the time this sees print, we'll have gotten a glimpse of your revamped Mysterio... any other favorite villains, supporting characters, etc. that you'd like to bring back, and/or revamp?

DJ: Well, one character I've always enjoyed, just because sometimes you can't beat the idea of a big, dumb guy marching around busting stuff up, is the Rhino. There's something about the Rhino that I just sort of fun to me. I think Venom is sort of a special challenge, although I think the concept of Venom has become far too watered down in the past couple of years. To me, Venom should probably be Spider-Man's ultimate villain and ultimate threat, instead of having this peaceful co-existence attitude. I'd like to see that re-established. You don't have to print that, but that's just a thought...

MB: Well, that'll be up to our esteemed editor in-chief!

DJ: One of the special things about Spider-Man is that he does have that great rogues gallery. Obviously Kraven has been redone recently, but Kraven as a concept, just the hunter/hunted idea, is always a good one. There's a lot of good stuff to play with there. And of course, Green Goblin and Hobgoblin are probably the most classic of Spider-Man villains.

MB: So do you remember your first Spider-Man comic?

DJ: Yes, I do! I don't remember the number... it was drawn by John Romita, a Kraven the Hunter story, somewhere in the 50s of AMAZING. On the cover, it had a white background, Kraven standing in the middle, six Spider-Man figures floating around him...

MB: Oh, the big Kraven cover!

DJ: That was my first Spider-Man comic. My second one wasn't for quite some time after that, because in my small town we had terrible comic distribution. That was the Black Widow issue, where she puts on that Diana Rigg kind of costume... which was also great! ... and by that time I was hooked... and I was reading as often as possible.

MB: So you were more of a DC reader growing up, and didn't get into Marvels until later?

DJ: I started out as a DC guy, mostly because of the Batman TV show. That came on the air when I was about six, and it was my first exposure to super heroes. On Saturday mornings, at the time, it was mostly DC heroes. And frankly, I would pick up the FANTASTIC FOUR back then, and I remember looking at the Kirby stuff thinking, "Whoa, this is too weird!" (Laughter) It wasn't until I was a little older, ten or eleven, that I started really getting into the Marvel stuff. And I think like many kids that age, I started to find the DC stuff totally boring. I really jumped into the Marvel stuff big time.

MB: Okay, that we can print! (Both Laugh) Actually, do you find time to read any of the books that are out now? You have any favorites?

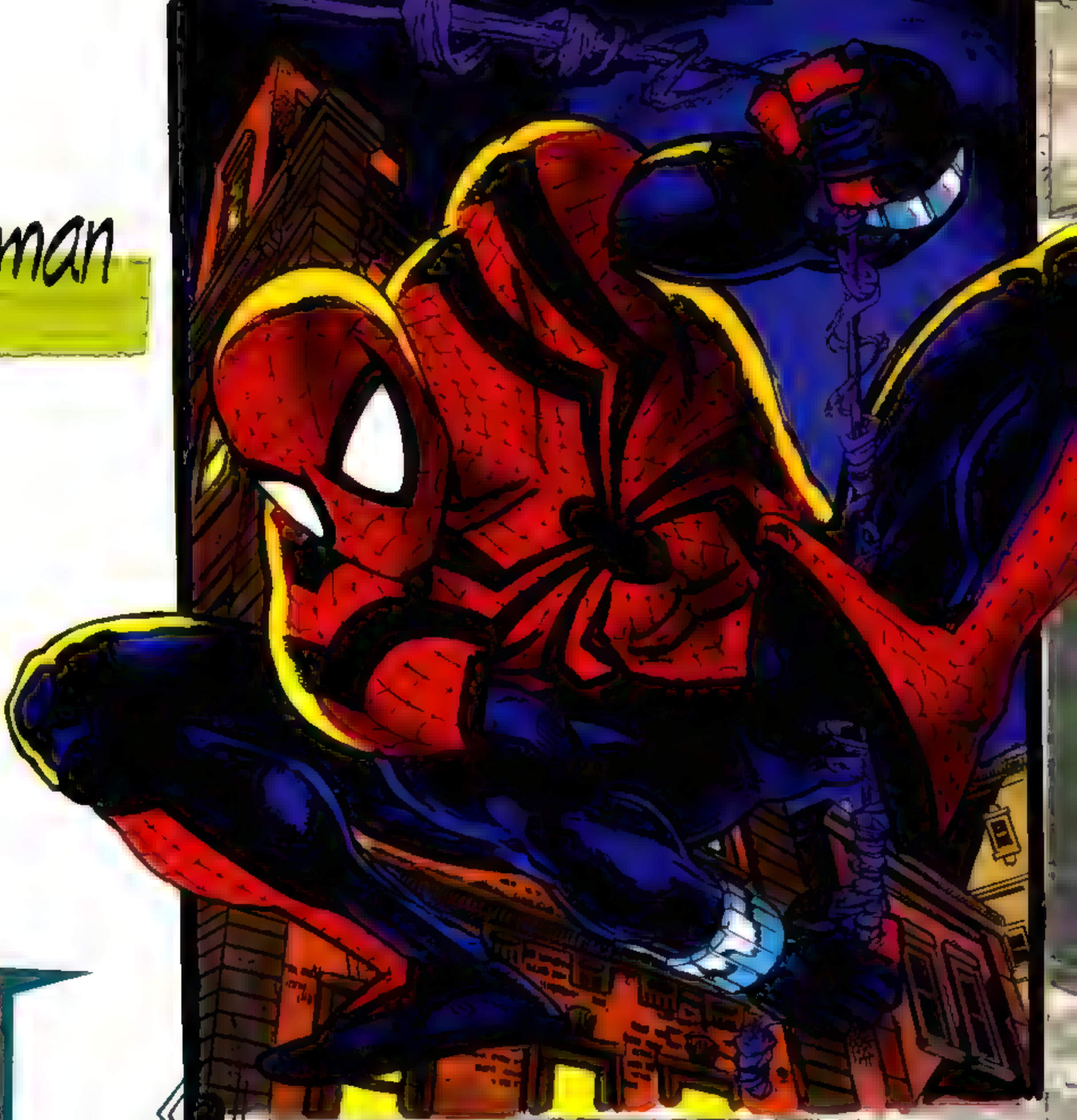
DJ: Oh, definitely. I think I'm still enough of a fan that, when I read a comic book, even a "lowly" super hero comic, where I recognize how hard it is to do a good one, if some one's doing it well, I really enjoy it. I like what Peter David has done on the Hulk a great deal. That's a great read. I continue to enjoy what they do on the X-MEN. I think the X-Men have gotten short-changed over the years. It's become an easy target to criticize, but when I pick up an issue, and I repeatedly see a story there with a beginning, middle, and end, and I know who the characters are, and it works! So I'm a big admirer of what they've done. I've always said that my favorite concept in comics, bar none, is the Fantastic Four. The FF, I think, is the one comic book in existence where you have no excuse for telling a bad story. You can tell a story as big as the universe, where Galactus eats everything in sight, or you can tell a story as small as that of a husband and wife and their son, or a brother and sister, or two old best friends. The story possibilities are absolutely limitless. There's no other comic like that out there. So I always enjoy the FF. There's some Vertigo stuff, and some DC stuff, too. There are writers whose stuff I look for. Anything by Mark Waid or Peter David is usually pretty good. I read the first issue of UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN the other day and got a big kick out of it!

MB: Yeah, we've gotten a lot of good feedback on that. So, in closing... any thoughts on the industry as a whole?

DJ: Well, to me, I think that as the prices have gone up across the board, and kids are buying five comic books for what they used to pay for ten, we've really got a responsibility to make the books better. I think that's very important. Fans deserve their money's worth... now more than ever before.

Mark P. Bernardo Marvel Comics' gift to the world of Volleyball

Spiderman



SPIDER-MAN: THE FINAL ADVENTURE

Fabian Nicieza/Darick Robertson/Jeff Albrecht
The milestone limited series concludes! His marriage shattered and his identity imperiled, Spidey battles the twin threats of Tendril and Dryrot! Only Mary Jane holds the key to his salvation, but will she use it? One thing's for certain, after this issue, Peter Parker will be Spider-Man no more!
(Shipping 1/9/96)

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #7

Kurt Busiek/Pat Olliffe/Al Vey
J.J.J. offers $20,000 for the web-slinger's true identity! Will Peter accidentally spill the beans when when Aunt May insists that he see an optometrist?! Maggie Thompson, in *Comic Buyer's Guide*, says, "...fans yearning for the Good Old Days—and new readers drawn to the titles by the TV series—should enjoy it (UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN) equally."
(Shipping 1/16/96)

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #232

Todd DeZago/Sal Buscema
Is the new love in Spider-Man's life also the greatest threat to his secret identity? Is Spidey's new career over before it can begin?
(Shipping 1/23.96)

SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN #2

"The Return of Kaine"—Part 2 of 4
Dan Jurgens/Klaus Jaanson
Continued from SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #231! A skeleton is pulled from the rubble of a razed factory. Could it be—Spider-Man's? Meanwhile, Kaine joins the Great Game, and his target is the Spider-Man that's breathing—at least for now. Warning: this issue starts a plot line that will conclude with a historic change in everything we know about Spider-Man! Continued in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #409!
(Shipping 1/2/96)

GREEN GOBLIN #6

Tom DeFalco/Scott McDaniel

The new Green Goblin faces Daredevil! Scott McDaniel, the artist behind DAREDEVIL: FALL FROM GRACE, again draws the Man Without Fear—this time in his classic red costume (DD, not McDaniel, wiseguy)!

(Shipping 1/16/96)

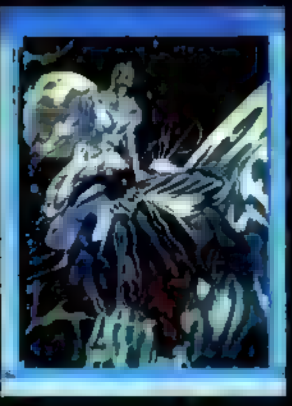
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #409

"The Return of Kaine" —Part 3 of 4

Tom DeFalco/Mark Bagley/ Larry Mahlstedt

Continued from SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN #2! If Kaine takes the life of Spidey, he a life as a normal human. You can bet cash money he's not going to let Spider-Man or Poison stop him from winning the ultimate prize! Continued in SPIDER-MAN #66!

(Shipping 1/9/96)



SPIDER-MAN TEAM-UP #2

Roger Stern/Tom Grindberg

Guest-starring the Silver Surfer! What foe could unite the wall-crawler and the star soarer? Would you believe the dual threat of the Mad Thinker & Quasimodo? Check it out: this issue features the SILVER SURFER's Tom Grindberg, plus Roger (SUPERMAN) Stern's first new Spider-Man work in over a decade!

(Shipping 1/23/96)

VENOM PRESS POSTER #215

Simon Bisley

Spider-Man's most fearsome foe squats on a hill of skulls, reprinting the cover to VENOM: LETHAL PROTECTOR #1 in full-size poster form.

(Shipping 1/23/96)

AMAZING FANTASY #18

Kurt Busiek/Paul Lee

Concluding the fully-painted look at "Spider-Man: Month One!" Witness the turning point that decided Spidey's life - he has the power, will he accept the responsibility? *Comic Shop News* calls AMAZING FANTASY, "a wonderful, high-quality complement to (Kurt) Busiel's work on UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN."

(Shipping 1/2/96)

SPIDER-MAN #66

"The Return of Kaine"—Part 4 of 4

Howard Mackie/John Romita Jr./Al Williamson

Continued from AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #409! The stakes: the life of Spider-Man! The prize: a regular life for Kaine! The judge: Kaine! Uh-oh, Spidey—is your insurance paid up?

(Shipping 1/16/96)

VENOM: ALONG CAME A SPIDER #3

Larry Hama/Joe St. Pierre

Maybe we should've called this one SPIDER-MAN: THE FINAL ADVENTURE too—because if Venom has his way, that's just what it'll be! Here's Venom as you like him—ruthless, unstoppable and out to eat Spider-Man's brain!

(Shipping 1/30/96)

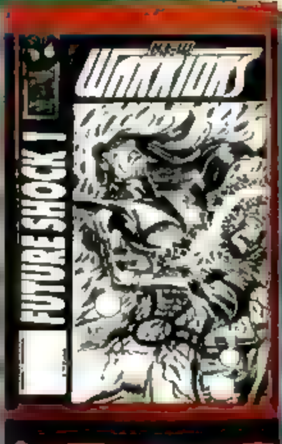
NEW WARRIORS #69

"Future Shock"—Part 2 of 4

Evan Skolnick/Patrick Zircher/Andrew Pepoy

As the reality of Timeslip's visions come crashing down, the Warriors find themselves besieged by the revived Sphinx—in a battle predestined to end in the death of Speedball!

(Shipping 1/30/96)



Dr. Samson -and the "Patchwork" Serial Killer

Doc Samson, a gamma-irradiation specialist, has been called in by the NYPD to consult in this horrific case.

"In specific conditions, exposure to gamma rays can cause the manifestation of repressed desires. Until now, we've been lucky in that we've never seen someone's repressed sexual desires—which in some cases can be quite dark and violent—distorted in this way. I believe our luck just ran out.

Continued in Doc Samson #1

Mutant Terrorist, Sabretooth, on a NY Rampage!

The group of mutants known as the X-Men have also been sighted in the area. It has not yet been determined whether they are joining pursuit alongside the police and the S.W.A.T. units that have been mobilized, or if they are working with Sabretooth. Sabretooth was last seen in the area near Grand Central Station. Please do not try to approach him, Sabretooth is considered extreamly dangerous.

More information in Sabretooth Special #1

THE DAILY BUGLE

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH, 1995 / Cloudy,mid 30's / Tomorrow, scattered showers, low 30's / Details, Page 24 **$1.25**

SPIDER-MAN: New Threat or Old Menace?

An Editorial by J. JONAH JAMESON

Look to the skies, New York, and you will see a sight that should boil your blood. Spider-Man, that reckless, glory-seeking vigilante who constantly thumbs his nose in the face of order is up to his old shenanigans. Responding to a generation of MTV channel surfers who consume sound bites like so many french fries, Spider-Man has decided to market himself like a sneaker. Yes, Spider-Man has a new costume, and I don't like it one bit.

I am not above championing our heroes. As everyone knows, my son John was an astronaut who dared touch the heavens in the service of this great country. But is Spider-Man deserving of our praise? I should say not. There are those who may scoff at my feelings towards Spider-Man, but just consider the facts as I outline his expanding web of evil:

Not long ago Spider-Man was spotted with that masked berzerker that the Bugle dubbed the Scarlet Spider. Yes, this paper was there first to document this new threat to our fair city. At first it seemed that the two were going to battle over copyrights, but it appears the two arachnids came to some sort of agreement, as they were later seen swinging side-by-side at the disturbance at the Ravencroft Institute. Who can guess what plots of evil they were hatching behind those eerie masks?

ARTIST SKETCH

Next Spider-Man went on his well documented rampage, chasing an unidentified female through our subway system. Yes, the New Warriors intervened and no one was hurt (at least not physically), but what if he had been chasing you? Worse still, what if he had targeted a child—maybe your own?

Then Scarlet Spider was observed in the company of the newest incarnation of the Green Goblin. The previous Goblins, often spotted with Spider-man, were madmen who terrorized our city through campaigns of death and destruction. Now a new fiend has taken up the mantle, and again one of these Spiders is there.

Finally, just last week, Spider-Man's ally the Scarlet Spider showed his true colors by going on a gun-toting rampage. Has it come to this—guerrilla warfare in our streets? Citizens, the time has come to put our foot down and demand justice. Do we want what happened with Spider-Man & that winged freak in Gotham City to occur here? I think not.

And another thing,

Continued in Sensational Spider-Man # 0

DEVILS BATTLE FOR HELL'S KITCHEN

Two Daredevils, One City: Who Will Win?

An Exclusive By BEN URICH

WAGNER / REINHOLD

There's a war being waged in this city, or rather, above this city. Up on the tar-covered roofs, under leaky water-towers, through clouds of soot, in the hiss of steam and the flutter of pigeon's wings. Two men battle for an area some wouldn't spend a nickel to save. It's an area called Hell's Kitchen. And the two combatants both claim the mantle of Daredevil. But the Daredevil we know is gone—isn't he? And if he isn't, is one of these men the real deal?

After many years on a beat covering the back alleys and scuzz holes, I have witnessed the secret, savage skirmishes that determine the ownership of this city. Almost all involve money. But this one is fought for a prize that cannot be bartered for money, drugs, or weapons. It's for the right to protect the innocent. The right to confront the evil that most of us cower from.

"Okay, my buddy was robbing that couple, I already told the cops that much. But listen, that maniac in the red suit was out of control. Out of nowhere this Devil jumps in, and the next thing I know, blood and teeth are flying in my face. He was brutal, man, breaking bones and laughing—the whole time he was laughing."

That is how Vincent Pistuggi described the red Daredevil. It is a familiar sight to drug dealers, pimps, muggers, and the scum that "The Man Without Fear" has sworn to punish. It is the vision I believe the evil see in their nightmares. The man inside was a good man, a man of justice and honor. But, according to these criminals, the man wearing the suit now has employed questionable tactics, violence that some would call inhumane, bordering on torture. Has this protector of the weak become corrupted by the evils of society? Or has he merely adapted to a ever darkening and threatening environment?

"I was walking home at night from a local diner. The next thing I know, some guy pulls a gun on me and asks for my purse. I was handing it over, and that's when this other guy saved my butt. He leaped from above, knocked the gun from his hands in about three seconds flat, and then tied him to a lamp post without breaking a sweat. He smiled, made sure I was okay, and disappeared into the night. Now that's a real man for you, and genuine hero."

That's how Theresa Miller described the second man in a costume that has not been seen in many years. This man wears the yellow & black suit worn by Daredevil early in his crime-fighting career. "This individual has been stopping criminals in a more 'traditional sense.' Employing methods used by your Captain America's or your Thing's. He disarms them, detains them, and sometimes even lectures them" commented Detective Robert Bosch.

For a time the city was patrolled by a man in red and black armor who tried to replace Daredevil. He said he was the new Daredevil, and that the Daredevil we knew was gone. But now we have two men who claim to be the real Daredevil. Maybe the real Daredevil is back, but which of these two is the original—or is neither?

Continued in Daredevil #350

AVENGERS ATTACK OWN MANSION

By C. KENT

MANHATTAN–The Avengers, the world's premiere super human team, engaged unidentified individuals late yesterday in what appeared to be a battle to enter their own headquarters. As twilight settled upon the city, the "Earth's Mightiest Heroes," joined by members of the super human group known as Force Works, launched an attack on the Avengers Mansion. Not since the Avengers reclaimed their Mansion from the "Masters of Evil" has the building been attacked by one of their own. Baffled by this turn of events, authorities have yet to provide an explanation behind the battle.

The Asgardian known as Thor fought alongside costumed adventurers such as the Wasp, Giant Man and Quicksilver, despite the fact that he appeared weak and emaciated. Notably absent were Captain America, Iron Man, and the Avengers chairperson, the Black Widow. Henry Peter Gyrich, a member of the Commission on Super Human Activities was quick to point out that there was probably a

Continued in Avengers #394

Biker Gang Slaughters Midwest Town

By BILL ROSEMANN

PLEASANTVILLE, IN—Late Monday night a gang of unidentified men and women went on a killing spree, reducing the population of a small Midwest town from 3,678 to zero. It is not known at this time who the killers are, or what provoked the mass slayings. The gang, reportedly riding motorcycles, escaped police custody and remain at large. The Indiana National Guard has cordoned off the town in an attempt to aid the search for possible survivors. At press time, a news black-out has been enforced, as speculation and rumors continue to abound.

"It's a conspiracy," said Ned Joad, a farmer of the neighboring county, "People don't believe me, but I know for a fact that town's been run by aliens for years now. And I don't mean people from Mexico or something, I mean green-skinned space critters. And they can change shape too! Thank God those biker people came when they did–they were on the money, they started blasting away at the right folks–they knew who the aliens were. Now those fellas in black suits and sunglasses got the whole place blocked off. I'm telling you, it's all a conspiracy."

Continued in Skull Kill Krew #5

Kids today have it great. They still have to be in by a certain hour, wait until Saturday morning for the bulk of their new TV programming, and fight for sugar-loaded cereal, but when it comes to toys, it's nothing but good news. Toy Biz has been at the forefront of an assault of amazing new toys; it's the company that has brought the Marvel characters to plastic for the past few years.

While the twenty something among us remember such great toys as the Evel Knievel stunt cycle, The Bionic Man doll which had roll-away skin (for repairs), and the Shogun Warriors, those huge escapees from a sci-fi film which shot such things as an entire fist, toys have changed. Thankfully. The toys produced today are simply far better crafted. TOY BIZ, and other companies, are starting to hire the actual artist who draw comics to work on the designs for the comic related action figures; a big change from the first wave of mid eighties X-men figures.

ARCHANGEL™ II
Wing-Flapping Action

SABRETOOTH™ CAPTIVE III
Break-Away Action

ICEMAN™ II
Extending Ice Limbs

HAVOK™
Projectile Throwing Action

ERIC THE RED™
Laser Gun

BATTLE RAVAGED WOLVERINE
Arm-Spinning Attack

SPIRAL™
Arm-Spinning Action

The newest line to be created is a bit of a surprise. Not announced at last year's Toy Fair, this line is the hottest catch of toys to come down the pike since the rubber ball. What could be so cool? The AGE OF APOCALYPSE toys, that's what.

It's the X-MEN with a twist. Imagine if Charles Xavier, the founder of the X-Men, was killed before forming the team. That's what was proposed for this dramatic storyline which saw print in the pages of the X books and will be featured on the animated television show. This world is very different than the one we know from the Marvel Universe, more akin to a *Terminator/Road Warrior* post-apocalyptic nightmare. In this version of Marvel history, the nemesis of Charles Xavier, Magneto (yes, he's a good guy here), does what Xavier would have: he forms the X-MEN. However, under his leadership things go a tad differently. The villain known as Apocalypse pulls a Machiavellian takeover, declaring himself world ruler, and the results are devastating. Nothing that we know from Marvel continuity is as it should be. Wolverine has lost a hand; Cyclops, an eye. No one is left unscathed, most are war-torn and bitter, millions have died. This is the setting, and it's not pretty.

The toys come spinning out of this with all the rough edges intact. The first assortment includes Wolverine, Cyclops, Gambit, Magneto, Sabertooth (with Wildchild), and, the big bad dude himself, Apocalypse (with Shadow King).

A strange but true fact is that Bob Harras (the X-MEN Editor in Chief) didn't go for the idea initially. The concept was pitched as a two-part story for the animated series. However, after thinking on it, Harras saw how the story could work, and not too long after took the idea far beyond the initial kernel of a concept, outstripping the animated series in both size and scope.

"We decided to base the toys more on the comic book than the cartoon," said Jesse Falcon of Toy Biz. "Our jaws just hit the floor when Bob Harras sent over the preliminary sketches for Age of Apocalypse. We knew right then we were going to do this."

Jesse goes by the title of product manager and is in charge of most of the X-MEN-related action figures. It's his job to shepherd the action figure from concept to finished product.

Jesse shrugs off the long hours he puts in, saying, "It

AFTER XAVIER: THE AGE OF APOCALYPSE

Next month we talk to product manager Dan for a preview of the Ghost Rider toys.

helps that the people I'm working with, those over at Marvel, and here at Toy Biz, are so good to work with. Plus it doesn't hurt that I've always enjoyed comics and toys."

On the Marvel side of things, there's Steve Behling and Garry Black, they're part of Marvel's Creative Services, the department that deals with all outside use of Marvel characters. In the form of 'three-views', they provide Toy Biz with the Marvel character's specifications. They actually provide this, or something like it, for all outside use of Marvel characters from McDonald's happy meal prizes to Wolverine shampoo bottles. In the case of toys, these three-views are used as a guide for the sculptor.

"Since the beginning, Marvel has supplied the three-views," said Steve. "This goes back to the very first X-MEN toys, but they were nothing like the three views done today. Marvel has always been in touch with the artist, and that's what our department does here in Creative Services. We have this giant pool of talent."

"Because we have all the resources," said Garry, "we naturally become the source."

Which is where Steve Skroce, the artist of X-MAN, comes in. He's the artist Steve and Garry hired to create the three-view for Apocalypse.

Was Steve Skroce excited about doing the job? "I love toys," said Steve; "I've got tons sitting on shelves around my drawing table. When I found out I could create the look of a toy, that was just too cool. And

Age of Apocalypse first assortment: (left to right)
Gambit Sabretooth (with Wildchild) Wolverine Apocalypse (with Shadow King) Magneto Cyclops

Apocalypse? That's about as cool a character as you get!"

"Steve Skroce is a good example to show how the finished product has gotten better," said Garry. "Now you can actually look at the toy and tell who the artist was who did the three-views."

"Here's one fun thing to do," continued Steve Behling; "take out the Apocalypse from the first assortment, which came out around 1990, and stack it up against the one just coming out. The change is pretty dramatic."

Why have things gotten so much better? "I think everybody had something to do with the improvement," began Garry again. "Toy Biz certainly went out of their way to get really good sculptures. They just didn't settle for 'oh, here's a little representation of this crappy little guy'. They went out of their way to get somebody who can sculpt features and give everything very heroic proportions.

"They also at the same time got people like Jesse," piped Steve, "and others like Carlos Lopez (one of the other production managers) and Joann McLaughlin (the department head at Toy Biz for action figures). They actually got people who care about the characters and aren't going to be satisfied if a character isn't right."

"It's more of a collaborative effort," added Garry. "And we're all somewhat fans. Everyone is a little overprotective at times of certain characters. There are certain characters for all of us. When something happens to Spider-Man I'm horribly, horribly protective. Mike Thomas, the director of the department, he's like that with the X-Men; he's very quick to point out if something isn't right. Which all adds up to better toys."

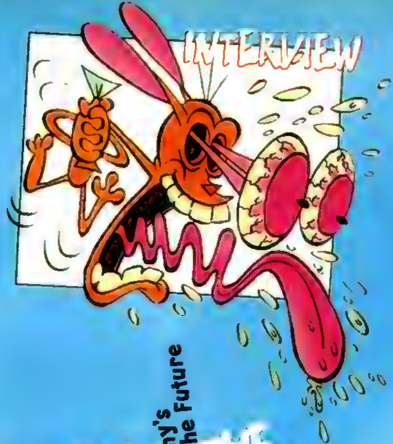
Age of Apocalypse toys should be in stores about the time you're reading this.

Steve Skroce with 2/1 scale casting of Apocalypse.

Steve Behling and Garry Black of Marvel comics.

Some of the Toy Biz crew: (left to right) Carlos Lopez (product Manager), Chris Fondacaro (art director), Jason Mattern (designer), Jesse Falcon (Marvel librarian), Damon Nee (editorial assistant), Joann Mclaughlin (VP of R&D Boys Toys).

General Entertainment!



IT'S WHAT DANES CALL THE QUALITY

John Kricfalusi and Company's Look at the Future

Spumco's *COMIC BOOK* is in the midst of its initial four issue run for Marvel Comics. Fans of John Kricfalusi, creator of Ren & Stimpy, are having another wonderful taste of his warped world with new star Jimmy the Idiot Boy and old favorite, his uncle George Liquor: American. Kricfalusi brought both characters with him from his days at Nickelodeon. As Kricfalusi and company prepare for *COMIC BOOK's* next limited series, LINK is compelled to ask, "After drooling idiots, farting uncles, and dogs with stool problems, what's next?"

"Now, we finally have these luscious teen-age models," Kricfalusi explained in answer to character Sodie Pop's absence in the first series. Sodie—named after famous animator Bob "Bugs Bunny" Clampett's wife—was initially intended to make her debut in the first arc, but Spumco was having a difficult time catching the natural essence and actions of a teen-age girl.

Although Kricfalusi fondly remembers Betty and Veronica from Archie Comics when he was a kid, he felt they always seemed to be just nice, cardboard representations of girls that age. With Sodie Pop he wanted more. "I wanted her to stand the way girls really do, act the way girls really do, and make the kinds of expressions that girls really make, especially teen-age ones—really cute," he explained.

"Yeah, they have peach fuzz on their knees like real teen-age girls," long-time partner and friend Jim Smith interjected.

"Did you ever notice," Kricfalusi furthered, "Catholic School girls only shave their legs as far as their knees? There's the faintest strands that the sun would catch...Turn off the tape!"

Besides Sodie Pop's debut in all her Catholic School splendor, *COMIC BOOK II* will also feature the return of Jimmy's cat Cigarettes. "It's about a

John Kricfalusi & Jim Smith

Kricfalusi and Smith

cat, a dog chasing a cat," Kricfalusi defended. Yet, given that the dog mentioned in the title is the same dog with the problematic stool in the first series, one has got to figure that the story is not quite as innocent as Kricfalusi claims.

Readers will also discover the origin of Cigarettes, Jimmy's first..."cat" in a story later featured in *COMIC BOOK*'s second arc.

Jimmy sort of becomes a father in a story entitled "Nutty, the Friendly Dump." Kricfalusi would not expand on the meaning of the title but described the dump as having "corn kernel eyes, a little baseball hat, and rides around on a skate." The dump also sleeps in a hot dog bun.

"Nutty, the Friendly Dump" also debuts an as-yet-unnamed police officer who loves to kiss babies. In one scene, Jimmy takes Nutty to the park for a picnic, to feed the ducks, and ride on the swings. "Jimmy is burping Nutty as this cop walks by," Kricfalusi explained, "and he gives him a big smack right on Nutty's little brown head!"

"Nutty is going to be a merchandising bonanza," he continued. "This is the cutest character we've ever done." Kricfalusi's plans for Nutty include stuffed dumps and talking dump. Although seen in paint sets and as a doll produced by the Spumco Toy line, "Jimmy of the Future" will make his comic book debut in *COMIC BOOK II*. Jimmy plays a member of the Idiot Race in the future. Due to a decrease in the female of his species, Jimmy travels back in time to find appropriate subjects to propagate the Idiot Race of the future. He watches twentieth-century network television to do so.

The aforementioned Spumco line of toys was something Kricfalusi started shortly after *COMIC BOOK I*. As a toy aficionado himself—he has an office full of them and collects toys from favorite cartoons—Kricfalusi was always suspect of the way toy companies operated. An "Idiot Committee," as he called it, is formed of executives from the cartoon and toy companies. No one involved in designing the toys has anything to do with the cartoon, so the spirit of the cartoons is lost in the toys. The toys remain popular only as long as the show does.

Kricfalusi decided to make his own toys of his characters, toys that would be fun in and of themselves, thus withstanding a fall in their parent cartoon's ratings. "It doesn't matter if you watch the cartoon or read the comic. You're going to love your dump, because it is a well made dump," he emphasized. "There will be no "teen-age mutant Ninja dumps!""

Spumco's far ranging plans are even more ambitious. "I'm planning to convince Marvel to put out a whole line of funny comics as an alternative to the superhero line and have us in charge," Kricfalusi said.

This plan would include his taking over the Harvey Comics line for Marvel. Kricfalusi feels he and his staff know what the best stories and who the best artists are. He cites Harvey's penchant for reproducing only the lesser quality stories from the seventies as the reason that the company failed.

With a gleam in his eye, Kricfalusi revealed how he would kick off his Harvey line. "Jimmy would be reading them," he explained. "Readers would see him reading them in his comic. I think it's a really cool gimmick."

Not to be deterred from his quest for cartoon re-eminence, Kricfalusi would love to play with the Hanna-Barbera stable of characters, too. He has already used Yogi Bear and Huckleberry Hound in his paint sets. In fact, he feels the H-B characters to be the perfect vehicles to train a new generation of funny animal book artists because there isn't a current generation around today, what with the drought in funny animal books.

"The Hanna-Barbera characters like Yogi and Huckleberry were brilliantly designed by Ed Benedict," he explained. "They're super-simple, easy to draw, and they look great." Thus, as artists practice their craft and gain expertise, they will be moved over to the Spumco books whose characters, as Kricfalusi admitted, are quite difficult to master. "I haven't mastered simple designs yet. I always design characters that are impossible to draw."

If all goes as planned, Spumco will have an assortment of funny lines of comics for both young and old to choose from. "There were tons of funny animal comics when I was young. Where are they now," Kricfalusi asked? "They don't make them anymore. I don't know why. I feel sorry for the kids."

Had John Kricfalusi had the opportunity to publish a comic book with Jimmy the Idiot Boy thirteen years ago, readers would be seeing a vastly different Jimmy today.

In the early eighties, Kricfalusi created Jimmy as a sidekick to another character, Mild Man, Friend of the Crippled and Blind. Mild Man's alias Dirk Paisley worked in the meat packing plant of "Cheapest Brand Meats" whose motto was"Where We Use All the Cow." Jimmy—an idiot even at this early stage in his development—was a cub assistant at the plant. His job was to drill holes in the salamis and fill them with fat. Dirk took a shine to Jimmy and subsequently took him on all his adventures. It was Kricfalusi's intention to make this cartoon even more questionable than the campy *Batman & Robin* television show of the '60's.

But Jimmy's origins go back even farther. This "pre-Jimmy," as Kricfalusi dubbed, him was not retarded and actually existed. Kricfalusi worked as a caricaturist in his earliest days of drawing. He worked everywhere from carnivals to sweet sixteen parties, the latter fondly remembered, with a lascivious grin, as being "the best."

It was while drawing caricatures at a racetrack that he met Jimmy. "He was the coolest-looking guy I had ever seen," Kricfalusi recalled. "He had a blond crewcut, these big saucer-like eyes, a giant chin, and a tiny mouth about a quarter of an inch away from his nose." Kricfalusi stored the memory of this man and used him as yet another sidekick to a character called "Brick Blastoff, Scientist of the Outback," an idea Kricfalusi had "like millions of years ago".

"I think that all sidekicks' names have to be Jimmy," he admitted. "I don't know why."

For his Dirk Paisley idea, Kricfalusi took the "pre-Jimmy's" chin away and made him an idiot, drooling and wetting all over himself.

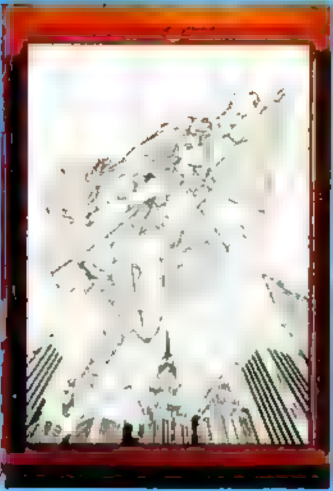
Like so many other ideas, Dirk Paisley was shelved to be used later or transmuted into something even wilder for a future project, while Jimmy got the starring role in *COMIC BOOK*. Even so, Kricfalusi toned down the character from its initial concept.

"In each issue, he was going to have an affliction," he explained. "In one issue, he'd have a club foot. In another he'd have palsy, anything you could think of. But he was happy."

We have been so beaten down by the system," he added, "that we automatically censor ourselves, now." Kricfalusi took solace in the fact that Jimmy "still wets himself all the time, and he drools all over the comic. You can add your own while you are reading it!"

SABAN'S MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS: NIUNJA RANGERS/VR TROOPERS #4

Frank Lovece/Darrick Robertson
It's a fun-filled flip-book featuring Tengu warriors, giant monsters and the new Ranger ninja suits. Plus: an action-packed adventure with TV's hottest heroes, the V.R. Troopers! All this and Jeb, the world's hippest talkin dog! (Shipping 1/16/96)



BARBIE # 63

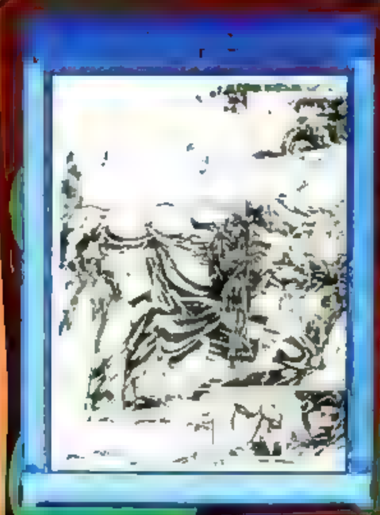
Barbara Slate & Lisa Trusiani
Mary Wilshire/Barb Kaalberg
Look, up in the sky, it's Flying Hero Barbie! The new super-powered Barbie debuts, saving the space shuttle and plunging down the river wild! (Shipping 1/9/96)

BEAVIS & BUTT-HEAD #25

Guy Maxtone-Graham/Rick Parker
The dumbnamic duo hope to ring in the New Year with a bang (heh, heh, I said bang). Somehow, the guys sneak into a New Year's Eve party with living, breathing chicks! But can our two Casanovas score by the stroke (heh heh) of midnight? (Shipping 1/16/96)

DOCTOR WHO #235

Gary Russell/Martin Geraghty
The Doctor steps into Northern Russia, exactly 100 years after a disaster called Chernobyl. Is an evil scientist using the side effects of the meltdown for his twisted genetic experiments?
(Shipping 1/23/96)



CONAN #8

"Godkiller"—Part 1 of 2
Dan Abnett/Joe Bennett
Conan's kickin' back in the Outback, but he needs some weapons, so he cuts down the tallest tree he can find. You think someone should have warned him about those tree-worshipping Picts? Check out the art of Joe Bennett! (Shipping 1/2/96)

GARGOYLES #14

Mort Todd/Amanda Conner/Alberto Saichann
Ghosts haunt New York City when a film crew casts evil spells for their movie! Who you gonna' call? The Gargoyles' resident movie-buff, Brooklyn! (Shipping 1/30/96)

DISNEY COMIC HITS #3

Jack Enyart/Cosme Quartieri/Horacio Ottolini
An all-new adventure starring the characters of the smash hit Disney's Toy Story! Buzz & Woody take a wild ride through Andy's room—upside down! (Shipping 1/16/96)

SABAN'S MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS #5

Fabian Nicieza/Ron Lim

Introducing the all-new Pink Ranger! Just when you thought Kimberly could do no wrong, she leaves the Rangers! Who is her replacement? Only those Fabian Nicieza and Ron Lim know! Two fight-filled morphinomenal stories, plus puzzles, pin ups & games.

(Shipping 1/2/96)

REN & STIMPY #40

Scott Benson/Darren Auck/Don Hudson

Ren & Stimpy loose their heads in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow!" And Washington Irving is rolling in his grave!

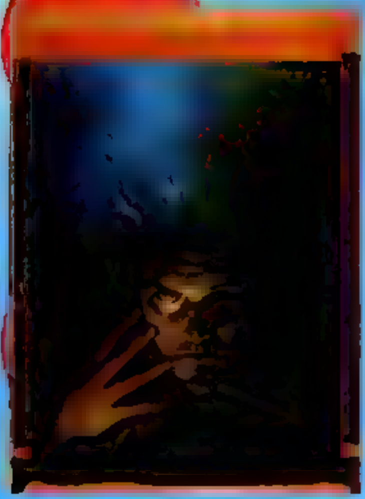
(Shipping 1/2/96)

COMIX ZONE #3

Dan Shaheen/Joyce Chin/Abraham Madison

The adventure based on Sega's hit video game continues! Can our heroes overthrow Mortus, save Cyan and pop back through the vortex into their own reality? Plus: game tips for players!

(Shipping 1/30/96)



NIGHTMARE CIRCUS #3

Painted Cover by Denis Calero

Mark Paniccia/The Pander Brothers

Continuing the saga based on Sega's hot video game! In face-to-face combat with the reality warped circus performers, Raven attempts to free their souls before he is trapped by the power of Diablo.

(Shipping 1/30/96)

CONAN THE SAVAGE #8

Mike Baron/Val Mayerik & Neil Hansen

First up, Mike (Nexus) Baron & Val Mayerick send Conan after some ivory in the rugged north in a beautifully painted tale. Then, Neil Hansen delivers a twist of fate to our Cimmerian pal, in a story set in his early days as a thief.

(Shipping 1/16/96)

MARVEL VERSUS DC #2

Peter David/Dan Jurgens & Claudio Castellini
Paul Neary & Josef Rubinstein

THE WAR TO SETTLE THE SCORE CONTINUES! Grab your ring-side seats as the two greatest comic book universes collide! The opening bouts begin:

Thor vs. Captain (Shazam) Marvel!
Aquaman vs. the Sub-Mariner!
Flash vs. Quicksilver!

Plus the cosmic entities behind the chaos meet to decide which universe is superior! Plus: Wolverine battles Killer Croc! Captain America dukes it out with Bane! Nightwing mixes it up with Gambit! Thanos meets Darkseid! The Mole Man invades the Batcave! This 48-page blow-out continues the greatest slam-bam, knuckle-scrapin', interactive comic book company crossover of all time!

Shipping (1/16/96)

MARVEL COMICS
VERSUS
DC
FLEER

DC
VERSUS
MARVEL COMICS
FLEER

Films

With the release last summer of such high-profile super hero films as *Batman Forever, Judge Dredd* and *Tank Girl,* that famous, often-heard question now rings louder than ever: "When are the movies based on the *Marvel* characters ever going to come out?"

Good question. Well, the answer contains both good news *and* bad news. First, the good news: there are actually quite a few Marvel properties that are currently in development for feature film projects by top-name Hollywood producers. There are television projects already in production, and more in the planning stages. The bad news is that none of the film projects are in the production stage yet, which means that Marvel fans will have to wait a while longer to see their heroes on the silver screen.

According to Marvel Films, which is actively involved in all of these projects, hopes are high with regard to the film projects that are in the "advanced stages" of script development. These films include: THE X-MEN, which will be produced by the team of *Richard Donner* and *Lauren Shuler-Donner* (Richard, of course, was the director of *Superman: The Movie,* the *Lethal Weapon* series of films and *Seven*); THE INCREDIBLE HULK, which will be produced by *Gale Anne Hurd* (who also produced *The Terminator, Aliens, The Abyss* and *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*); BLADE THE VAMPIRE HUNTER and GHOST RIDER, both being written by *David S. Goyer,* who is involved with a Marvel-based property for television, as well. At this point, none of the scripts for these films have been given the green light for production, but they are the furthest along in the development process.

Other Marvel-based films, which are in the stage of "active script development," include: THE FANTASTIC FOUR, IRON MAN, THE SILVER SURFER, DOCTOR STRANGE, DAREDEVIL and CAGE.

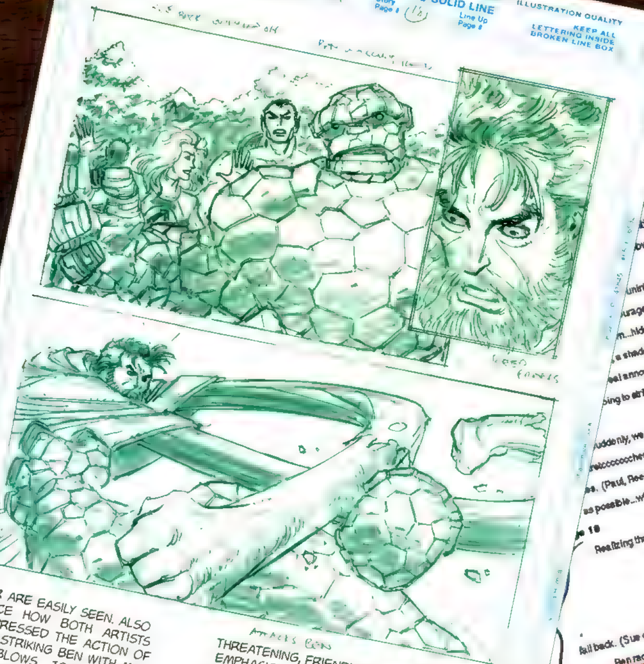
You've probably noticed that one particular, much-talked-about Marvel movie project has not been mentioned yet. Okay, here's the official word on it: the SPIDER-MAN movie is still mired in litigation (there's been a long-running, complicated legal dispute between several film producers regarding ownership of the film rights to the character; many of the details of the dispute have reportedly been settled, but some are still in question, thus holding up the project). Writer-producer-director *James Cameron (The Terminator, Aliens, The Abyss, Terminator 2: Judgment Day, True Lies)* is still attached to the project, but it is still unclear when casting and production will actually begin.

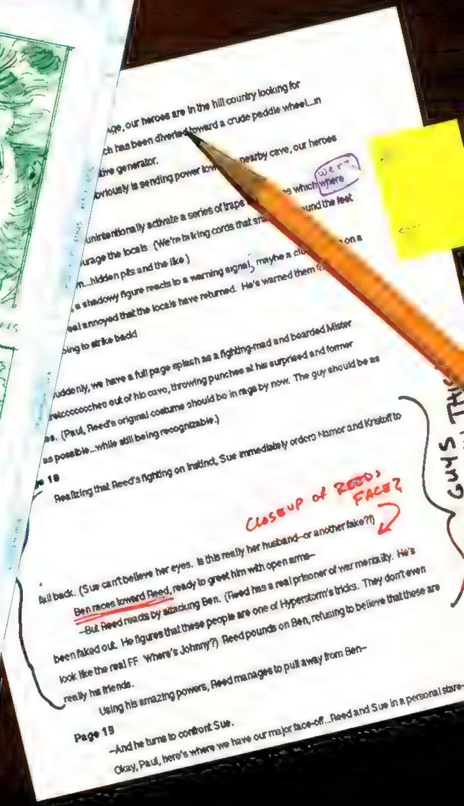
Moving over to television, both the *X-Men* and *Spider-Man* animated shows on FOX returned for their new seasons in September, as did the *Marvel Action Hour,* only with a new name and format. Now called the *Marvel Action Universe,* the show has been expanded to ninety minutes, with the returning *Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man* shows now being joined by *Biker Mice From Mars.* In addition, a new production team is working on the FF and Iron Man shows, giving both series a distinctly new and improved look. Marvel Films is also exploring the possibility of producing animated features, as well.

Live-action television projects that are "very far along" in the script development stage include: GENERATION X, being developed by *Eric Blakeny,* who created *21 Jump Street* (Generation X co-creator *Scott Lobdell* is serving as Story Consultant); FURY, developed by the aforementioned David S. Goyer and reportedly very faithful to the comic book version of Nick Fury and S.H.I.E.L.D.; and THE PUNISHER (bearing no relation to the ill-fated feature film from the early 1990's). These projects, very close to being finalized, according to Marvel Films, would be TV movies or "backdoor pilots" for a series of TV movies or weekly series based on these characters. If given the green light, these projects could be on the air as soon as the spring of 1996.

Obviously, Marvel has *not* been sleeping while all the other guys are getting their characters into the movie theaters. But, as with all things worth waiting for, it's apparently going to take some time...

ARTIST VS. ARTIST





DID YOU EVER WONDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU GAVE TWO DIFFERENT ARTISTS THE SAME PIECE OF PLOT TO DRAW?

WELL, IN ARTIST VS. ARTIST YOU WILL SEE JUST THAT. IN THE FIRST OF WHAT WE HOPE WILL BE A LONG-RUNNING SERIES, JOHN ROMITA, SR. (LEFT) WILL BE GIVEN A TWO TO THREE PANEL SECTION OF A PLOT TO ONE OF MARVEL'S COMICS. WE WILL THEN VERY SECRETLY AND SELECTIVELY GIVE THE SAME PIECE OF PLOT TO ANOTHER ARTIST; THIS TIME IT WAS JOHN'S OWN SON, SPIDER-MAN ARTIST JOHN ROMITA, JR. (RIGHT). IF YOU THINK THESE TWO DIDN'T TALK TO EACH OTHER ABOUT WHAT THEY WERE DRAWING, YOU'RE CRAZY.

WITH ASSIGNMENTS IN HAND AND PENCILS TO PAPER THEY BEGAN TO INTERPRET THE PRINTED WORD INTO VISUAL EXPRESSION. THE RESULTS ARE AMAZING. EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE SEPARATED BY THREE THOUSAND MILES THE ARTISTIC LINK BETWEEN BOTH IS EVIDENT.

LOOK AT HOW BOTH ARTISTS CONCENTRATED ON REED'S FACIAL EXPRESSION. THE WILD LOOKS OF ANGER AND FEAR ARE EASILY SEEN. ALSO NOTICE HOW BOTH ARTISTS COMPRESSED THE ACTION OF REED STRIKING BEN WITH MULTIPLE BLOWS. JOHN SR. ADDED THE NUANCE OF REED USING HIS FANTASTIC STRETCHING POWERS TO TANGLE UP THE THING, THEREBY REDUCING THE THING'S ABILITY TO FIGHT BACK.

NOTICE AS WELL THE THING'S RIGHT HAND. BOTH ARTISTS HAVE DRAWN THE HAND IN AN EXPRESSIVE, PLEADING GESTURE, IT IS OUTSTRETCHED AND OPEN IN A NON-THREATENING, FRIENDLY MANNER. TRULY THE EMPHASIS IS ON EMOTION AND THESE TWO ARTISTS HAVE CONVEYED THAT MESSAGE QUITE CLEARLY.

JOHN ROMITA, SR. AND JOHN ROMITA, JR., TWO OF MARVEL'S FINEST ARTISTS HEAD TO HEAD. WHO WON? ONLY US: THE FANS WHO GET TO SEE WHAT THESE TWO LEGENDS CAN DO ON A PIECE OF ART BOARD.

IN TWO MONTHS, JOHN ROMITA, SR. GOES UP AGAINST A NEW OPPONENT AND TOGETHER THEY TACKLE THE STAR SPANGLED AVENGER.

Creating The Comics

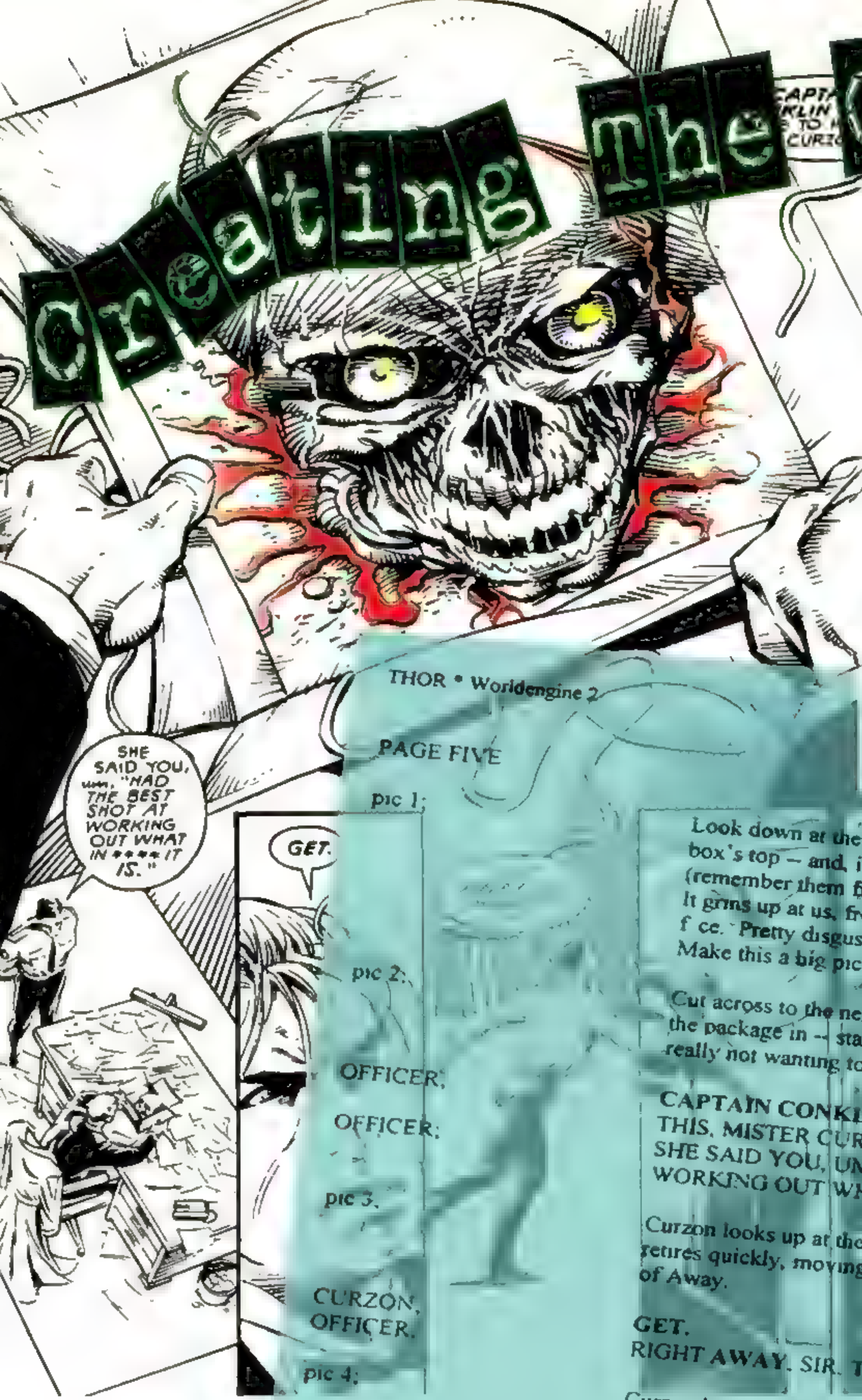
THOR

WORLDENGINE

WARREN ELLIS

PART TWO;

"RUN THROUGH"



THOR • Worldengine 2

PAGE FIVE

pic 1: Look down at the desk -- we see Curzon's hands opening the box's top -- and, inside, the severed head of a Sending (remember them from last issue?). It grins up at us, frozen in rictus, sap oozing from cuts in its f ce. Pretty disgusting thing to find on your desk, right? Make this a big pic.

pic 2: Cut across to the nervous officer -- for it was he who brought the package in -- standing next to the desk, shaking a bit, really not wanting to be there.

OFFICER: CAPTAIN CONKLIN SAID YOU WERE TO HAVE THIS, MISTER CURZON, SIR.

OFFICER: SHE SAID YOU, UM, "HAD THE BEST SHOT AT WORKING OUT WHAT IN **** IT IS."

pic 3: Curzon looks up at the officer with an evil eye. The officer retires quickly, moving with fleet foot in the general direction of Away.

CURZON: GET.

OFFICER: RIGHT AWAY, SIR. THANK YOU, SIR --

pic 4: Curzon looks inside the box. His face twists with revulsion. Small pic, same POV as the last would be nice.

pic 5: Smallish pic again, same POV, as Curzon feels compelled to pull out his cigarettes and lighter.

FROM OFF PIC, CURZON: NO SMOKING IN HERE! KISS MY HAIRY ENGLISH

By Polly Watson

Everybody knows you're not supposed to squeeze the Charmin. Everybody knows pro wrestling is fixed. Everybody knows that Tom Hanks can't win an Oscar this year, no matter how cute he looked wearing that fishbowl on his head in Apollo 13.

But what everybody doesn't know is how a comic book becomes the full-color glossy-papered glory that appears on the stands every month like clockwork. It's a process that is based on both wild inspiration and mind-numbing precision, and it's a process that is rapidly changing in certain areas as new technology is developed.

Let's use the popular comic THOR as an example. THOR is a book that's been around since 1962 (longer than certain members of both its editorial and creative teams!), and has built up a large and dedicated fan base. Kids worship Thor, men admire him, and old women faint at the sight of physically advanced 13-year-old boys dressed up like him on Halloween.

But none of this would be possible were it not for the efforts of the team that collaborates to make the book ship on time and look great twelve months out of the year.

The players include the editorial team (editor and assistant editor), the writer, penciler, inker, letterer, colorist, color separator, manufacturing team, and printer.

The whole process kicks off with the editorial team pestering the writer for a plot. THOR's editorial team is comprised of editor Ralph Macchio and his assistant Matt Idelson; the pestered writer is Warren Ellis, a chain-smoking sensation from the U.K.

This, then, is how it works: Matt Idelson's job is to act as the spurs to Warren Ellis's horse. After about three weeks of cat-and-mouse, Warren usually comes through with at least six pages of full script. A few weeks later, just as Matt is entertaining the notion of hanging himself from Marvel's drop-ceiling with one of those FANTASTIC FOUR neckties, Warren will give in and deliver the remaining sixteen pages.

Now, normally a writer will just deliver the plot at this early stage in the game. Later, after the pages have been penciled, s/he will script the issue based on the pencils. S/he will also indicate balloon placements for the letterer's convenience. Warren, however, prefers to work "full script", which means that the plot also contains the dialogue, captions and sound effects, despite the fact that the author has not yet seen so much as an eraser's width of pencils.

"That's how all British writers work!" avows Warren when asked why he doesn't work from plot to script. "It's the common thing over here. Most American writers work the Marvel way because it's faster—it takes a lot less time to knock a plot out, and then you can have the penciler set to work sooner. I prefer full script because it's actually easier on the artist—he knows exactly what to draw, and how much room to leave for dialogue and such.

For an editor, the main benefit of working full script is that the issue can be lettered the very instant the pencils walk through the door. Warren does not do his own balloon placements, though—he leaves that up to the letterer, Jon Babcock, who doesn't mind in the least.

Well, so much for the mechanicals of the plotting and scripting process - but how is it really done? What, besides the promise of filthy lucre and free Spider-Man cereal, inspires Warren Ellis to cram his hulking frame behind the confines of a desk and put Thor's pedal to the metal?

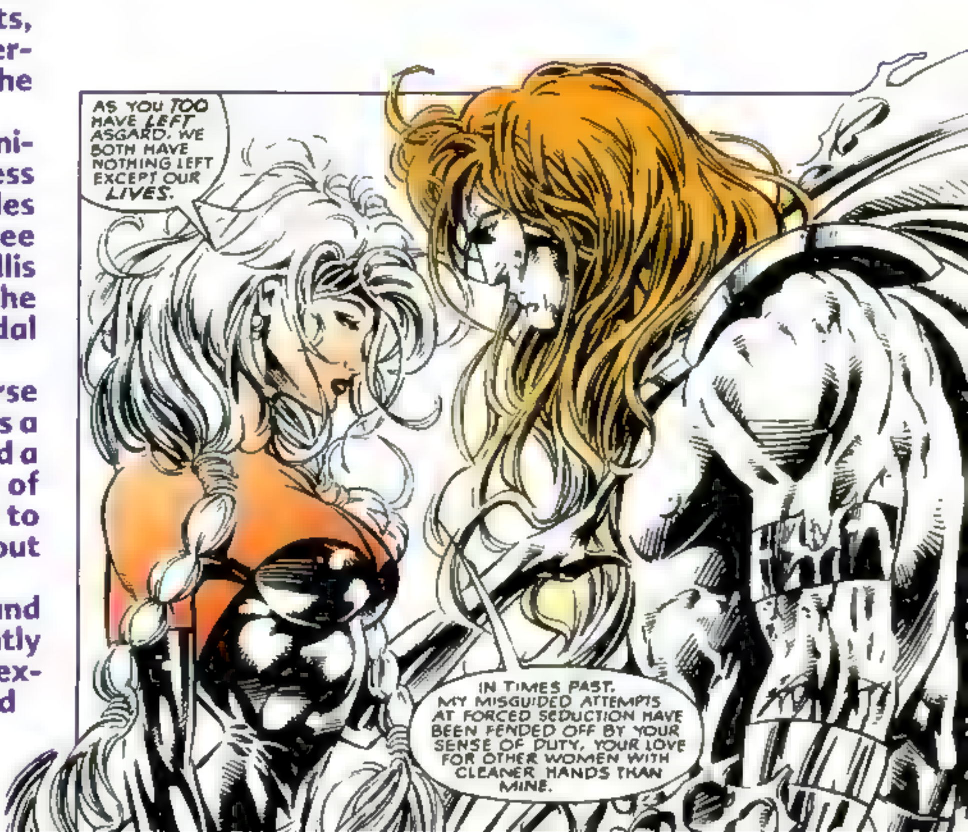
"I'd already read a lot of Norse mythology back in my youth (Warren's a crusty old 27), but I went back and read a whole lot more," says the bard of Boscombe Road. "And of course I had to read a few issues of THOR to find out where the character was now."

Well known by comic fans and professionals alike for his intelligently gruesome tales with their eerie, unexpected plot twists, Warren has worked on such notable Marvel books as RUINS, HELLSTORM, DOOM 2099, DAREDEVIL and DOCTOR STRANGE (to name just a few), Ellis was only too happy to impart the story of the young, innocent "first love" that flowered into the grand passion that's paying his plumbing bills today.

"I was about eight or nine," he says, warming to the subject with relish, "and I opened up this comic, and on the splash page was a great dinosaur devouring a cowboy. There was blood everywhere, and the dinosaur's mouth was open so that you could see a good deal of chewed and mangled cowboy. It was just wonderful!" Warren sighs happily. Nearly two decades after witnessing this splendid disregard for table manners, he is still enamored of sights like this that can only be found in the pages of a comic book.

"I really do love writing," moans the man who used to do all of it on an old electric typewiter. "I just get out of bed, have a pot of coffee or so, ten cigarettes, and then I'm at it. I'm as happy as the day is long!"

NEXT MONTH: Mike Deodato lights up like a burning chemical plant when asked about the joys of drawing THOR!

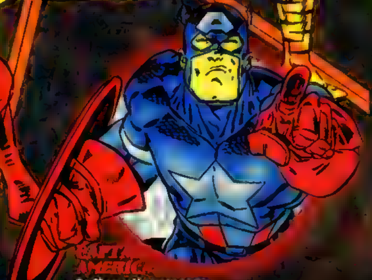


THE EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES

AVENGERS

CAP, THOR & IRON MAN...TOGETHER AGAIN! FOR THE LAST TIME!?!

Just the sound of the word seems to evoke fond memories of yesterdays past. Grand tales of heroism and bravery are fondly recalled. And even more, vivid images of colorful heroes—the characters responsible for these tales—begin to coalesce in the mind's eye. And just beyond that, just beyond these images starting to take form, lurks that simple yet significant catch phrase that represents—no, embodies the word "Avengers": The Earth's Mightiest Heroes. Imagine, if you will, the Avengers mythos to be a solid and impenetrable stone fortress. What, or rather who, has kept this fortress so strong for so long? Was it just your average, run-of-the-mill super heroes? No, quite on the contrary, the names of these heroes go far beyond the realm of ordinary super powered beings. The answers, in fact, are quite elementary. The spots on Earth's Mightiest team are easily awarded to the three members who have spearheaded the franchise through its many years and many adventures: Captain America, Iron Man, and Thor.



As Marvel's very own Sentinel of Liberty, Steve Rogers has forever fought for the American dream, from the desperate days of World War II to the uncertainty of modern times. A noble and courageous man, Captain America has often been considered the living embodiment of patriotism, and though he has left the roster from time to time, he most certainly fits the role of backbone to the Avengers.

Soaring through the air as the Golden Avenger, Tony Stark has consistently utilized the double threat of his genius intellect and amazing suits of armor against his opponents. Iron Man has often been found guilty of holding a somewhat rogue status among the Avengers, due in part to his bouts with alcoholism and physical infirmities. He is also responsible for the cessation of several Avengers from the main branch, which later resulted in the formation of Force Works.

As the Norse god of thunder, the son of Odin has often found himself more at home on Earth with the Avengers than in his native realm of Asgard. Though he has undertaken several different guises while upon Midgard (Earth)—such as Dr. Donald Blake and Sigurd Jarlson—the mighty Thor has never strayed too far or tarried too long from his designated position as the Avengers' main muscle.

OVER THE YEARS, THESE THREE HEROES IN PARTICULAR have built the foundation that makes up the Earth's greatest fighting force of super-powered individuals. From their first meeting to their last, Cap, Iron Man, and Thor have continually added strength and support to one of the most popular comic book titles of all time.

And who can forget the first meeting between these three heroic titans? Besides featuring the first Silver Age appearance of Captain America, AVENGERS #4 also marked the first time that Cap, Iron Man, and Thor fought alongside each other as teammates—two elements destined to make this early Marvel mag an instant collector's item.

The cover that depicted Cap springing into action with his fellow Avengers behind him said it all, toting the phrase "Captain America Lives Again!" in bold blue letters. This 1963 Stan Lee-Jack Kirby collaboration told a story of rebirth and bitter irony, all in the traditional Marvel style. Readers witnessed the return of Captain America to the Marvel Universe, a feat made possible by the intervention of the Sub-Mariner. After discovering a tribe of Eskimos worshiping a human figure enclosed in a block of ice, Namor violently threw the block into the sea. He then dispersed the tribe, enraged at them for simply being human. Little did Namor know that the figure within the ice was none other than Captain America—the hero that would later be discovered by the Avengers. At the end of the story, Lee's masterful use of irony became evident as he displayed Namor as being responsible for freeing the man who later that day defeated him.

And much like their first historic meeting in **AVENGERS #4**, the *last* battle that these three Avengers fought together was of grand proportions. **AVENGERS: THE TERMINATRIX OBJECTIVE**, a four-issue limited series by Mark Gruenwald and Mike Gustovich, our three heroes competed in the ultimate contest—*the race against time*. It began when two distinct incarnations of one time-lord—Ravonna—decided to pit two different factions of Avengers against one another—all part of an elaborate scheme to save Kang's waning grasp upon his vast empire. On one side, Ravonna chose the three classic Avengers: Captain America, Iron Man, and Thor while on the other side, Ravonna's future version, Revelation, chose the three classic heroes' more contemporary counterparts: U.S. Agent, War Machine, and Thunderstrike. In no time at all, the six heroes realized that to save their time era, they must work together against the forces that opposed them. This included the legendary time-lord Alioth, a being so powerful that even Kang shuddered upon hearing his name. In the end, the Avengers were used as little more than pawns of Kang and Ravonna, but their time era was saved and they lived to see another day.

Although **AVENGERS: THE TERMINATRIX OBJECTIVE** was the last *significant* time that Captain America, Iron Man, and Thor met and fought alongside one another, it hasn't been the *only* time. In the span since then, the three Avengers have met on two brief and chance occasions—once during the whole Infinity Crusade debacle, where they fought against one another on opposite sides of the Goddess-spawned war; and later in **FORCE WORKS #10**, where they attended the memorial service of fellow Avenger Simon Williams, aka Wonder Man.

Two important events—the return of Captain America and the Terminatrix Objective—that serve as bookends to a long and successful run of Cap-Iron Man-Thor team-ups. And between these bookends lie hundreds of pages containing classic tales showcasing the life and times of these three stalwart Avengers. But now, that chapter in the lives of the Avengers has finally ended. Its long and moving story forever holding a place in our hearts. At long last, we can finally close that book and place it back on the shelf.

Just in time to open a new one.

This bold new chapter of the Avengers mythos was launched in July with the arrival of **AVENGERS: THE CROSSING.** Writers Bob Harras, Terry Kavanagh, Dan Abnett, Andy Lanning, and Mark Waid toiled during the first half of the year, striving to discover ways to breathe new life into the oft-regarded stodgy group of characters known as the Avengers. Their efforts proved to be successful, as the result was a beautifully crafted storyline that helped in not only revitalizing the Avengers, but also in creating dramatic new story lines. What's happened within the Avengers family (**AVENGERS, STEVE ROGERS: CAPTAIN AMERICA, IRON MAN, THOR, FORCE WORKS, AND WAR MACHINE**) has made Marvel history. Three Avengers have died. Two have been reborn. And one has betrayed them all.

Now in January, the Avengers are ready to harness the energy that's sprung from **THE CROSSING** storyline, and use it to propel them into the new year. Just as **AVENGERS: THE CROSSING** showcased the reunion of most of the Avengers' second tier characters (i.e. Hawkeye, Scarlet Witch, Quicksilver, Vision, etc.), **AVENGERS: TIMESLIDE** will instead focus upon the first tier characters that we know and love so much, namely Captain America, Iron Man, and Thor.

STEVE ROGERS: CAPTAIN AMERICA will, as the title hints, begin to deal more with Cap's alter-ego, Steve Rogers, under the guidance of popular writer Mark Waid (X-MEN, *Flash*, *Impulse*) and penciler Ron Garney. Expect less talk and more action than you're used to from this title as Waid and Garney throw the Star-Spangled Avenger into the middle of what he was born to be in the middle of—action! Captain America, as it's plain to see, is one of the two reborn Avengers mentioned above. The other is his hammer-swingin' buddy.

THE MIGHTY THOR paves new roads of adventure and excitement under the control of new writer William Messner-Loebs (of *Wonder Woman* and *Hawkman* fame) and talented artist Mike Deodato. Following Warren Ellis's highly acclaimed '*WorldEngine*' story—the one responsible for revamping the character into his new formation—Messner-Loebs plans to dive into the problems of a god struggling to cope with his newly gained mortality. Also, look forward to unexpected developments in Thor's relationship to the Enchantress. The Son of Odin is sure to have his hands full!

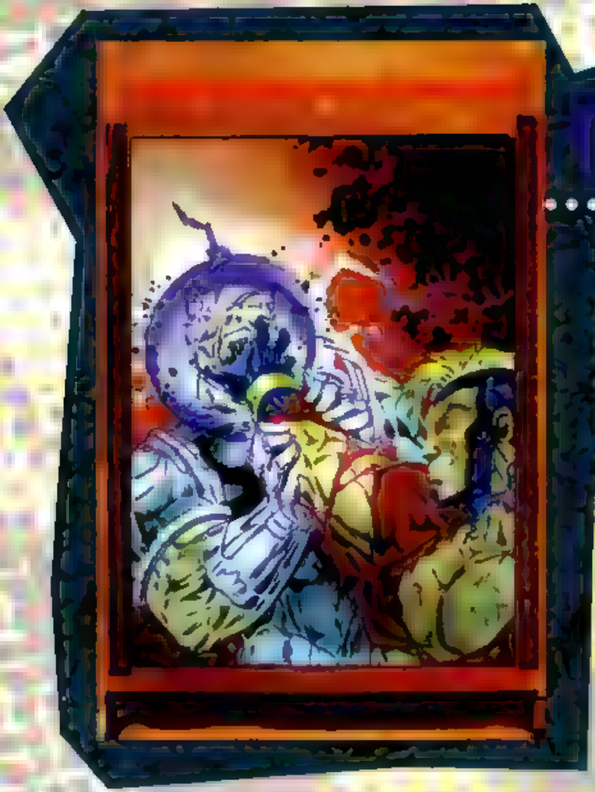
Which brings us to Iron Man. The betrayer. Following the events of the **AVENGERS: TIMESLIDE** special, the life of Tony Stark will never be the same. And we mean *never*. The man whom the world once knew as Tony Stark has completely vanished, as if he never was. Terry Kavanagh and Heitor Oliveira have been constructing an intricate story of suspense and excitement in **IRON MAN** that sees no immediate end! Anticipate changes the likes of which you've rarely seen before.

In any event, the **TIMESLIDE** story which debuts in December will catapult into action with a 48-page special and will be carried along for several months upon the sturdy shoulders of Captain America, Iron Man, and Thor—the three pillars which have kept the Avengers fortress so very strong for so many years.

What the future holds for these three living legends, only the Fates know. And they're not telling.

CAPTAIN AMERICA, IRON MAN, THOR.
The Earth's Mightiest Heroes.

Watch out world, the Avengers are back!



CAPTAIN MARVEL #4

Fabian Nicieza/Ed Benes/Mike Sellers
"Sons of the Fathers"—Part 4 of 4
Genis to finally accepts the mantle of Captain Marvel! Our scruffy space slacker travels to the Kree Homeworld to confront the man responsible for killing the 2,000 innocent Shi'Ar!
(Shipping 1/2/96)

CAPTAIN AMERICA #449

Mark Waid/Ron Garney/Denis Rodier
"The First Sign"—Part 1 of 4
Cap, Thor & Iron Man rejoin the Avengers! Manhattan is plunged into chaos when the revamped Zodiac strikes! Cap's in deep doo-doo, and the Earth's Mightiest Heroes are nowhere to be found! Continued in THOR #496! If you read the other comic magazines, then you know everybody's raving about the the team of Mark Waid & Ron Garney on CAPTAIN AMERICA!
(Shipping 1/2/96)

FORCE WORKS #21

Dan Abnett & Andy Lanning
Heitor Oliveira/Rey Garcia
In the aftermath of AVENGERS: TIMESLIDE, Force Works faces the fact that the team is finished. But how will they respond to the Avenger's pressures?
(Shipping 1/2/96)

FANTASTIC FOUR UNPLUGGED #4

Painted Cover by Jim Calafiore
Mike Lackey/Adriana Melo/Tim Dzon
A dream turns into disaster when Johnny Storm & Laura Green (who's really that Skrull-babe Lyja) are attacked by the Mole Man's subterraneans! It's some FF favorites in a hoo-hah ride through the tunnel of love to hell—for only 99 cents!
(Shipping 1/2/96)

FANTASTIC FORCE #17

Tom Brevoort & Mike Kanterovich/Dante Bastianoni/Ralph Cabrera
In this penultimate issue, Diablo drags the Force to his personal hell! But what mystery villain is behind the scenes?
(Shipping 1/9/96)

SILVER SURFER PRESS POSTER #217

Claudio Castellini
It's a cosmic clash of the titans when the Surfer takes on Thanos in a poster-sized version of the cover to COSMIC POWERS UNLIMITED #1—by Claudio (MARVEL VERSUS DC) Castellini!
(Shipping 1/9/96)

THOR #496

William Messner-Loebs/Mike Deodato
"The First Sign"—Part 2 of 4
Continued from CAPTAIN AMERICA #449! Cap shows up on the thunder god's doorstep with about a kajillion Zodiac Agents in pursuit, but Thor ain't up to snuff! Who's gonna' save these mighty heroes? Find out in IRON MAN #326! The team that made the DC's amazon a fan-favorite unite again here!
(Shipping 1/9/96)

WAR MACHINE #24

Dan Abnett/Fred Haynes/Johnny Greene
Guest-starring the Avengers! TIMESLIDE knocked War Machine silly, now Rhodes is forced to come to terms with his new armor, but he might discover a truth he rather not know!
(Shipping 1/9/96)

FANTASTIC FOUR UNLIMITED #13

Cover by Claudio Castellini
Roy Thomas & Dan Abnett/Herb Trimpe & Tbd
Continued from the pages of FANTASTIC FOUR! In the first tale, Doctor Doom deals with the loss of his homeland when he returns to Latveria. In the second adventure, the world's most dysfunctional super-family (Reed, Nathanial & Franklin Richards) open old wounds—and rip open some new ones. It's 64-pages of action [plus a cool cover by Claudio (MARVEL VERSUS DC) Castellini]!
(Shipping 1/16/96)

FANTASTIC FOUR #410

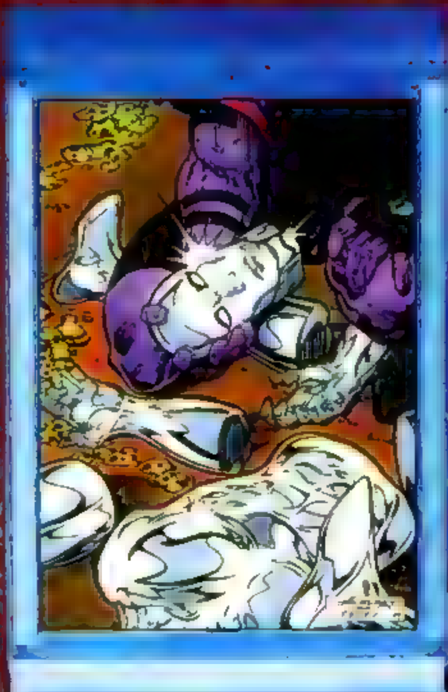
Tom DeFalco/Paul Ryan/Danny Bulandi
Mr. Fantastic returns to Four Freedoms Plaza, but can he squeeze back into the hearts of those he left behind? This issue establishes relationships which will be pivotal in developments in 1996.
(Shipping 1/30/96)

IRON MAN #326

Terry Kavanagh/Jimmy Cheung/Mark McKenna
"The First Sign"—Part 3 of 4
Continued from THOR #496! Only Cap, Thor & Shell-head can save New York City from the all-new Zodiac! But can Iron Man discover how to power his armor in a world without energy? Plus: the Avengers must make a decision that will haunt their nightmares forever! Continued in AVENGERS #396!
(Shipping 1/16/96)

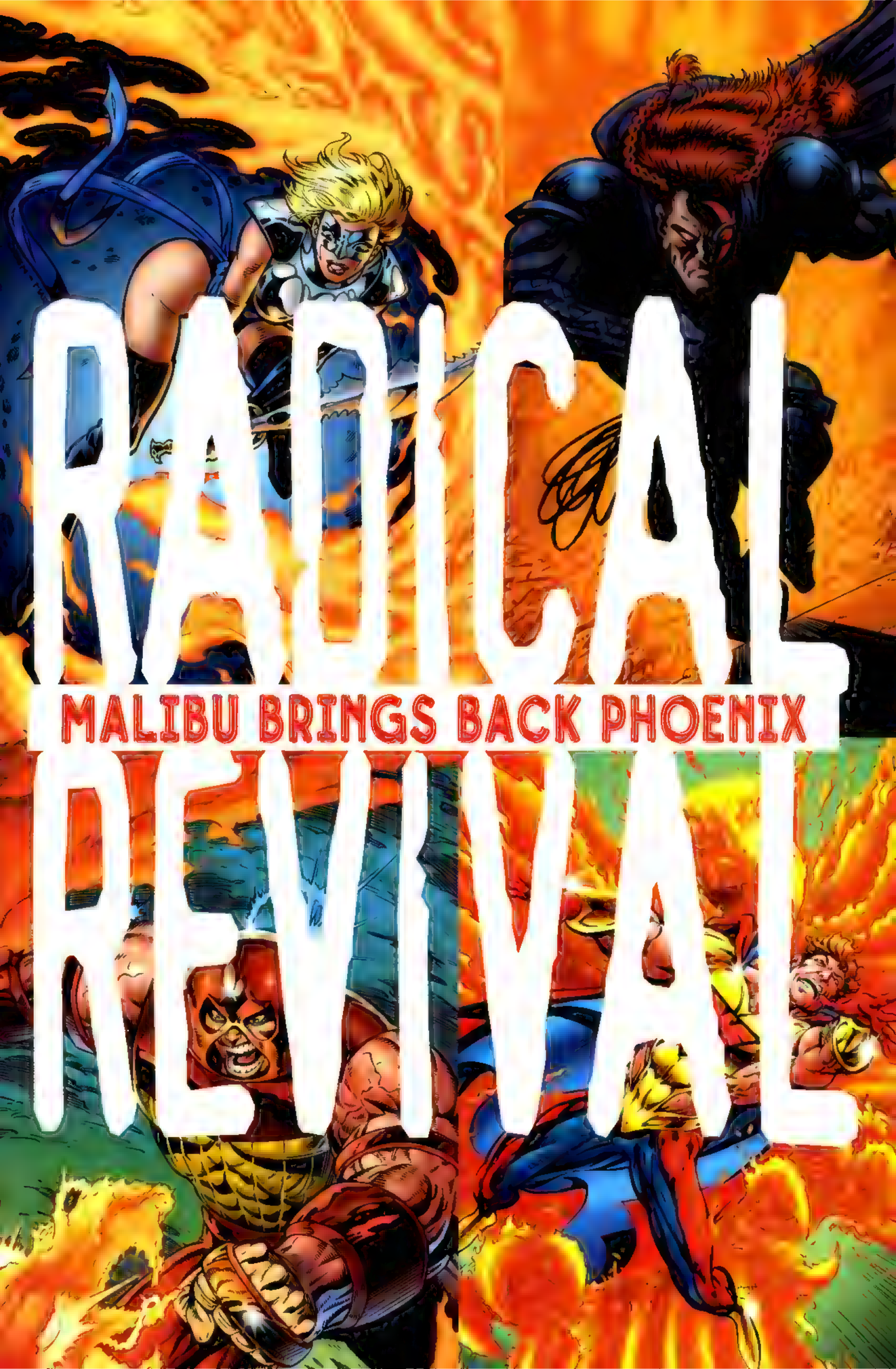
AVENGERS #396

Bob Harras/Mike Deodato/Tom Palmer
"The First Sign"—Part 4 of 4
Continued from IRON MAN #326! Captain America, Iron Man & Thor assemble the Avengers! The big boys pump up the Earth's Mightiest Heroes, but can even their combined power defeat the Zodiac?
(Shipping 1/23/96)



SILVER SURFER #114

George Perez/Tom Grindberg/Bill Anderson
After his battle with Blackbody, the Surfer falls to pieces—literally—and is sold for scrap! New writer George Perez sends the sky rider where no Marvel hero's gone before!
(Shipping 1/30/96)


RADICAL
MALIBU BRINGS BACK PHOENIX
REVIVAL

What is Phoenix doing in the Ultraverse? And, who will she be? It's a mystery that will be unraveled in November and December as Malibu Comics introduces "The Phoenix Resurrection."

She was once part of the X-Men, and remains that series' most memorable character. She is Phoenix and she returns in November, not to the Marvel Universe, but to the Ultraverse!

Malibu has developed "The Phoenix Resurrection", a 7-part saga featuring Marvel's hot X-Men characters that will run as a flip-cover serial in all November Ultraverse titles. The special serialized 21-page story leads to the ultimate year-end event that unites mutants and ultras in the X-Men Ultraverse December big event. And the burning question of "Who will be the next Phoenix?" will be answered!

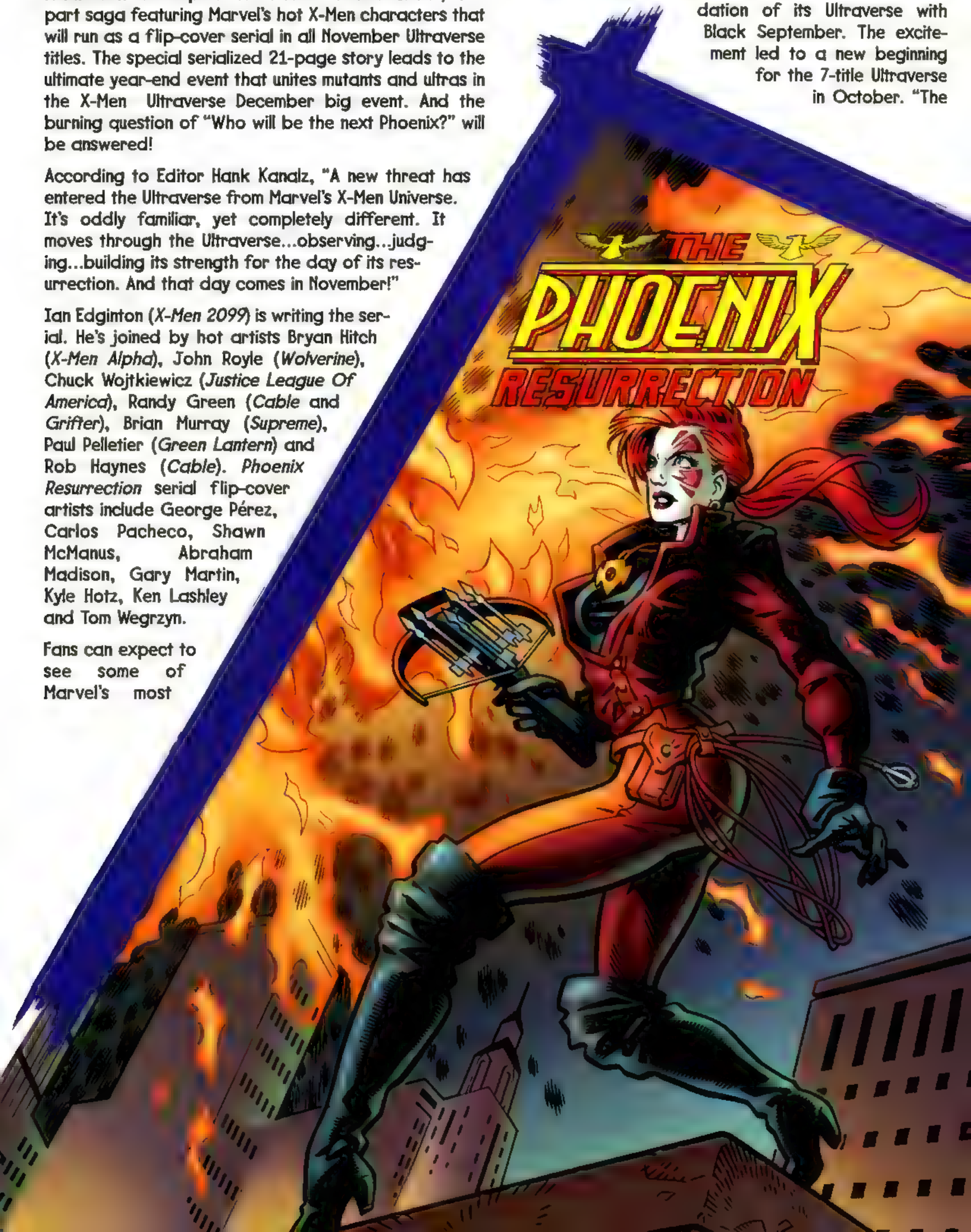
According to Editor Hank Kanalz, "A new threat has entered the Ultraverse from Marvel's X-Men Universe. It's oddly familiar, yet completely different. It moves through the Ultraverse...observing...judging...building its strength for the day of its resurrection. And that day comes in November!"

Ian Edginton (*X-Men 2099*) is writing the serial. He's joined by hot artists Bryan Hitch (*X-Men Alpha*), John Royle (*Wolverine*), Chuck Wojtkiewicz (*Justice League Of America*), Randy Green (*Cable* and *Grifter*), Brian Murray (*Supreme*), Paul Pelletier (*Green Lantern*) and Rob Haynes (*Cable*). *Phoenix Resurrection* serial flip-cover artists include George Pérez, Carlos Pacheco, Shawn McManus, Abraham Madison, Gary Martin, Kyle Hotz, Ken Lashley and Tom Wegrzyn.

Fans can expect to see some of Marvel's most popular characters like Wolverine, Gateway, Beast and Hellstorm join the cast of Ultraverse characters. Even Thor and the new Spider-Man visit the serial.

Each Ultraverse title for November will carry a different and complete chapter of the serialized story in a flip-book format, at the usual low $1.50 cover price! "We're giving fans more story and fewer ads," said Malibu President Scott Rosenberg.

In September, Malibu shook the foundation of its Ultraverse with Black September. The excitement led to a new beginning for the 7-title Ultraverse in October. "The



Ultraverse is moving forward in a bold new direction," said Rosenberg. "We have all these major events taking place and we're cutting back the cover price to $1.50 so we can share the excitement with a greater number of fans."

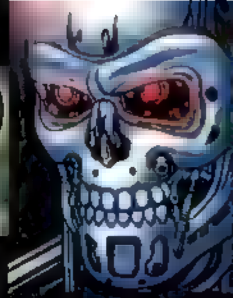
November's "Phoenix Resurrection" adventures lay the groundwork for December's giant X-Men Ultraverse event. *The Phoenix Resurrection—Genesis* and *The Phoenix Resurrection—Revelations* books will have profound effects on continuity.

In *Genesis*, a new threat rises in the Ultraverse...a force so powerful, it will take mutant X-Men and ultraheroes alike to prevent the threat from destroying our universe. The Phoenix rises once again—whether it will be good or evil can only be determined by who is chosen to become the next Phoenix!

In *Revelations*, the battle to save the cosmic balance between the Marvel and Malibu universes concludes. This senses-shattering special event features Marvel's X-Men and Malibu's most popular ultras! What price must the Ultraverse pay to ensure the survival of the universe—and who will be standing, and created, when the smoke clears?

You'll have to check out "The Phoenix Resurrection" serial in November and December to find out the answers to these burning questions!

TERMINATOR



Just When You Thought it was Safe: Terminator 2 is Back!

So, like all fans of the *Terminator* films, you heaved a big sigh of relief when the T-1000 disappeared into a pit of molten steel, knowing that finally Sarah and John Connor could have the peace they deserved, right?

Well, if that's what you still think, Malibu Comics has a big surprise in store for you. This month, Malibu teams up with famed film director James Cameron to unveil its two Terminator limited series, TERMINATOR™ 2: PRESENT WAR - CYBERNETIC DAWN and TERMINATOR™ 2: FUTURE WAR - NUCLEAR TWILIGHT. Both of the limited series, which begin in November, will run for four issues each, and then conclude in a blowout issue — a №0 — in March 1996. Cameron and Lightstorm Entertainment have been working closely with the creative teams on Malibu's Terminator comic books, so fans are guaranteed to be treated to a faithful rendering of their favorite characters and stories from the Terminator world in Malibu's two limited series.

The CYBERNETIC DAWN storyline, with creators Dan (PUNISHER: YEAR ONE) Abnett and Rod Whigham at the helm, takes up where the *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* movie left off. The T-1000 may have been destroyed in a pit of molten steel, but Sarah Connor isn't convinced the nightmare is over as she escapes the long arm of a government agency. And now she must insure the safety of her son, John, who is destined to lead the Human Resistance against the Machines in the Future war.

The NUCLEAR TWILIGHT storyline is written by Mark Paniccia with art by Gary Erskine and follows the events as the Human Resistance attempts to overthrow Skynet. As the rogue computer carries about its task of annihilating humanity, components of the resistance plan (which were planted in the past in CYBERNETIC DAWN) take effect allowing John Connor and his troops to infiltrate Skynet's complex. From there it's non-stop action.

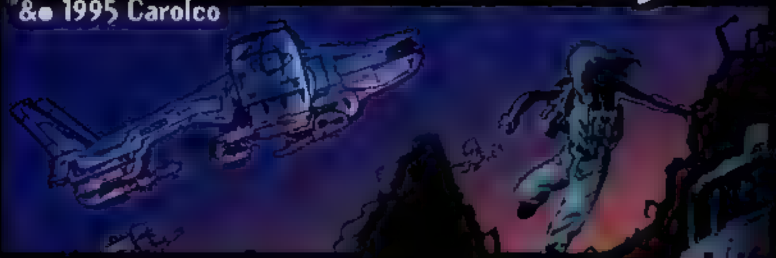
As with previous Malibu Media projects, the events of the two limited series will run in tight continuity not only with previous Terminator lore, but also with each other. Effects of the "present" CYBERNETIC DAWN limited series spill over into the "future" NUCLEAR TWILIGHT series — most importantly in the components of the future war's resistance plan, which is planted in the CYBERNETIC DAWN series and is critical to the events of NUCLEAR TWILIGHT.

And, as you can plainly see, the artwork in the two limited series continues the top-notch standard of all Malibu Media projects.

Gary Erskine from the NUCLEAR TWILIGHT series put it best when he said, "Fans will enjoy a psychotic obsession with detail on the likes of endoskeletons, HKs, and the centurions and a visually-stunning cinematic approach to the artwork." With that said, what else can we possibly say, but...

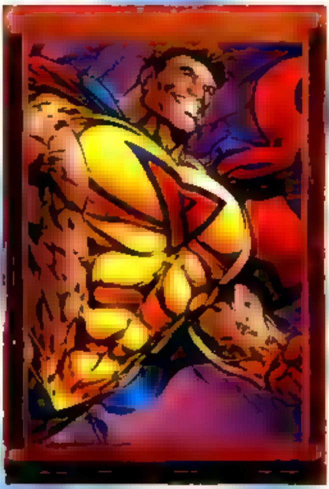
Hasta la vista, baby.

™&© 1995 Carolco



Malibu **ULTRAVERSE**

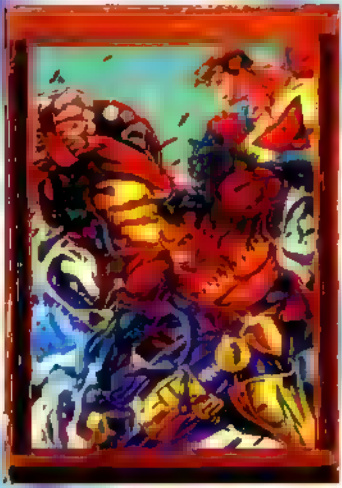
HANDBOOK TO THE MALIBU ULTRAVERSE #1 (OF 2)



- Ultraverse character bios
- Marvel character bios—as they appear in the Ultraverse!
- New character bios

Cover by *Jerome K. Moore* Various writers and artists

This 48-page special features in-depth information and secrets of Malibu Ultraverse heroes and villains, as well as updates on the Marvel guests in our universe! Featuring artwork by *George Pérez, Jeff Matsuda, Art Thibert, Bryan Hitch,* and many more! Bios of the new Mantra, Juggernaut, the Exiles, Foxfire and others.



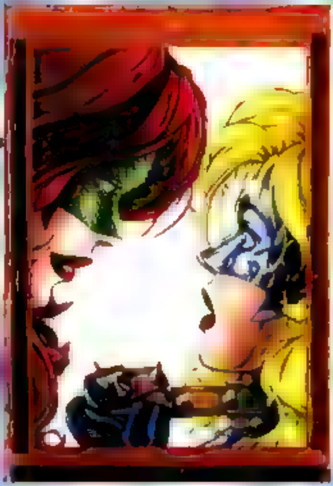
THE ALL NEW EXILES #4

- *Guest-starring UltraForce!*

Ian Edginton/Chris Alexander

Still hated and hunted, the Exiles are confronted by ULTRAFORCE. The Ultraverse is really gonna rock when these two powerful teams go at it.

MANTRA® #4



- Featuring the return of NM-E!

Cover by *Dave Roberts & Jim Amash*

Roberts & Amash

NM-E versus the new teenage Mantra. All this, and the new Wrath too!

PHOENIX RESURRECTION: THE AFTERMATH

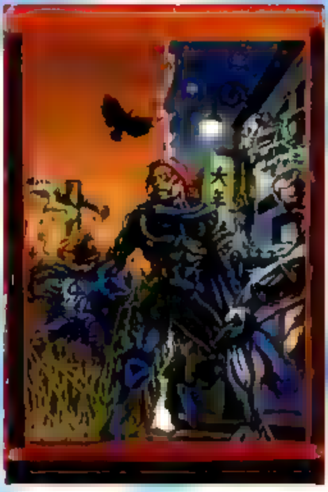
- Introducing FOXFIRE!
- Leads into next month's hot new Foxfire series!

Cover by *John Royle & Philip Moy*

Ian Edginton/John Royle & TBD

The price of survival from the deadly force of Phoenix is high! This is the aftermath of the cosmic crossover of the X-Men and the Ultraverse! It also lays the foundation for the Ultraverse's major launch of 1996...Foxfire!

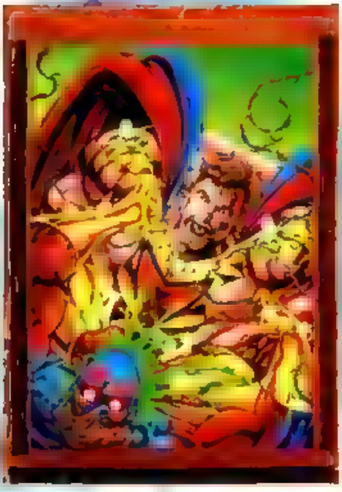
THE NIGHT MAN #4 (OF 4)



- Guest-starring Lord Pumpkin!

Steve Englehart/Andrew Wildman & Stephen Baskerville

After a fierce battle with the villainous Lord Pumpkin, The Night Man finds his energies depleted, and his cannibalistic curse kicks in. However, Lord Pumpkin has followed him through the breach, and they both find themselves face-to-face with MANGLE! Next month: The Night Man and Gambit.



PRIME #4

- The END of SPIDER-PRIME?

Cover by *Kevin West & Philip Moy*

Gerard Jones & Len Strazewski/West & Moy

Spider-Prime vs. Prime—Who's comic will this be? Powered by the mysterious Spider totem, Kevin becomes Spider-Prime for a final confrontation with the empty, power-crazed Prime body that has taken over in his absence! Can Kevin protect Phade and himself from his own ultra alter-ego? And which Prime will survive this climactic knock-out, bone-crunching battle?

Also Available in signed, limited editions Prime #1 and Ultraforce #1

RUNE #4

• Back again—the original Rune
• The Plague Years... (very ghastly)

Cover by *Joe St. Pierre & Alex Bialy*

Len Kaminski & Paul O'Connor/Tony Aikens

The original Rune during the violent and deadly plague years. What else can we say?

ULTRAFORCE #4

• New Story Arc! "Smoke and Bone"

Cover by Darick Robertson & *George Pérez Warren Ellis & Ian Edginton/Robertson & Jerome K. Moore*

The first installment of an exciting new story arc! There's an ultra-assassin who strikes quickly and stealthily. His last target was a powerful senator—his next target could be UltraForce! Also introducing the gruesome threat of the Rawborgs!

Watch UltraForce every Sunday at 9:00 A.M.

ULTRAFORCE/SPIDER-MAN #1A AND #1B

ULTRAFORCE/SPIDER-MAN #1A and #1B
• Starring Spider-Man and the Green Goblin!

#1A cover by *Steven Butler* #1B cover by *George Pérez*

Marv Wolfman/Steven Butler, Ken Branch & TBD

The UltraForce finds itself in the Marvel Universe and must join forces with a most unusual duo—Spider-Man and the Green Goblin!

In this most unique experiment, the story begins and ends the same, but branches off into two distinct directions, splitting the UltraForce team with Spider-Man and the Green Goblin. Both stories feature ALL of our principle characters, and both issues conclude with a senses-shattering unified ending!

Both versions are available for the same price! Buy the one you prefer.

#1A features half of UltraForce in an adventure with the Green Goblin! If you prefer more Goblin with your UltraForce, buy this one!

#1B features the other half of UltraForce in an adventure with Spider-Man! If you prefer an extra dose of Spider-Man, buy this one!

MALIBU COMICS® MALIBU MEDIA • JANUARY 1996 Checklist—Full Color Comics

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE® #32

• Cover gallery Cover by Leonard Kirk Chris Dows & Colin Clayton/Terry Pallot

While on a diplomatic mission, Gul Dukat and Major Kira find themselves stranded on a barren planetoid. The two stumble upon a deadly Cardassian faction that is ready to unleash a doomsday machine against the Federation and Bajor. Kira and Dukat must put aside their differences if they want to save DS9! Not available outside the U.S. and Canada. (TM, ® & © 1995 Par. Pic.)

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE® ULTIMATE ANNUAL #1

• Two back-up stories Cover painting by Mark Brill Laurie Sutton/Leonard Kirk

An alien artifact abandoned by the Cardassians at the end of their occupation of Bajor has been reactivated, sending waves of temporal distortion through DS9. This causes the crew to experience leaps into alternate timelines and alerts the Cardassians and the artifact's creators of its whereabouts. It's a race for control of the very fabric of time! Not available outside the U.S. and Canada. (TM, ® & © 1995 Par. Pic.)

TERMINATOR™ 2 PRESENT WAR: CYBERNETIC DAWN #3

• Official T2 Universe • Linked to Future War timeline, Nuclear Twilight • Starring Sarah Connor!

Dan Abnett/Rod Whigham & Jack Snider

With every ounce of courage, determination and inner strength, Sarah Connor has twice survived attacks by terminators to save the life of her son John, who will be vital to the human victory in the future. Now, the saga continues with Sarah and John on the run from FBI agents Mossberg and Wetherby, and soon to meet up with three terminators. Not to mention that they have stumbled upon the dark design behind Skynet's latest time-jump mission, the implications of which make their own survival all but irrelevant. (TM, ® & © 1995 Carolco)

TERMINATOR™ 2 FUTURE WAR: NUCLEAR TWILIGHT #3

• Official T2 Universe • Linked to Present War timeline, Cybernetic Dawn • Starring John Connor!

Cover painting by Star Wars artist Rob Prior Mark Paniccia/Gary Erskine

Special issue! Inside the mind of the ultimate computer, SKYNET! In a nano-second, SKYNET attempts to devise a foolproof plan to insure its survival on the planet. Weakened by the Human Resistance and on waning reserve power, the world's most powerful computer fights to stay alive while John Connor and crew decide to destroy its complex. (TM, ® & © 1995 Carolco)

Creator Bio

Chuck Dixon

CHUCK DIXON HAS NEVER KNOWN LIFE WITHOUT COMIC BOOKS. "They always seemed to be there. I don't remember a time when I wasn't into comics." Think that young Chuck was lucky? Think again. "I was sick a lot when I was a kid and my parents bought me a lot of comics to keep me occupied."

Dixon chuckles. "Of course, that line appears in about half of the profiles I see about comics creators. I heard once, from a successful writer, that to be a successful writer, something in your past had separated you from society and made you more of an observer than a participant. That works for me."

Born in Philadelphia, Dixon still observes as much as possible. "I watch a lot of movies. They really influence my writing, especially pacing and scene changes. I try to get as much on the page with as little verbiage. I like making the artist tell the story, not me. That's why the kids buy the books!"

Dixon first got cash for composing "a book called *Evangeline*, not to be confused with *Avengelyne*. Evangeline was a James Bond sort of a nun who worked for the Vatican." From there, "Larry Hama gave me a break and hired me to work on SAVAGE TALES and KULL THE CONQUEROR backups." Ever since he's been unstoppable. The high points of his career include *Airboy* (Eclipse), ALIEN LEGION, *Catwoman*, *Detective Comics*, *Green Arrow*, *Green Hornet*, LAW DOG (Epic), *Guy Gardener*, MOON KNIGHT, THE 'NAM (Marvel), many, many issues of the PUNISHER, *Robin* and the SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN.

Currently chronicling *Detective*, *Robin*, *Catwoman*, *Green Arrow* and CONAN THE SAVAGE, Dixon hopes to one day finish MARVELS II and (when we spoke to him) had just accepted a top secret S.H.I.E.L.D. assignment he can't tell you about it. What can he say? Read on...

1 First Comic Read?
Oh, boy. It would have been a pre-super-hero Marvel monster book. STRANGE TALES or the like. Those are the first ones I that remember reading; I was fascinated by them and would stare at them for hours. I used to go to the monster movies at the kids but I would never get scared. We used to have air raids for nuclear attack when I was a kid. I really could see a time when we were defending our canned goods in the radiated rubble. Dracula and Frankenstein couldn't stand up to that.

2. Favorite Comic of All Time?
Early in CAPTAIN AMERICA, when Kirby was still doing it, there were some issues with the Red Skull and the Exiles. I really loved those issues. Straight ahead action! Re-reading them now, the story doesn't make much sense, but it doesn't matter, because it moves so fast.

3. Favorite Work of Your Own?
That's easy! THE 'NAM, issue #66. Most people said they cried when they read it. If you can make people cry over a comic story... wow. I have read over a jillion comics stories, and I've only cried once. It was over the Belly Robber, from *Frontline Combat*. I read it as an adult, but it was printed in the '50's. In the comic book medium, making people laugh is easy. Making them cry is tough.

4. The One Person You'd Like to Meet?
I'd like to have met Sam Peckinpah. He directed the *Wild Bunch*, with William Holden and Ernest Borgnine. He's a guy whose own creativity killed him. He would always see the perfect vision of the movie, and the studios of the time wouldn't agree with him. He constantly got himself into hot water. I respect his work and the way he would fight for his creative vision. His movies changed my way of looking at stories.

5. Things You Collect?
Like everybody else in comics, I have a toy collection. Mostly old play sets from when I was a kid. Some were ones I used to have and re-bought; the others are ones my mom wouldn't buy me. I also collect original comic art and I am hopelessly addicted to laser discs.

6. Favorite Pastime or Hobby?
Probably watching movies. I usually see them in theaters or I will watch them on laser at home.

7. Favorite Halloween Costume?
I went out as Dr. Doom one time when I was a kid. I was about nine. My mom and dad had to actually create a costume from scratch because nothing was available in stores! I think we got a standard face mask and just painted it silver, and I wore a green sweatshirt and cape. I may have looked silly, but I was Victor von Doom, darn it!

8. The Last Good Book You Read?
American Tabloid, by James Elroy. It's about the Kennedy years. It's a crime novel, a gangster novel with the Kennedys and Howard Hughes as the hoods. It's a work of fiction...

9. The Last Good Movie You Saw?
God of Gamblers. It's a movie from Hong Kong, and it stars Chow Yun-Fat. He's huge; he's the biggest star in Asia after Jackie Chan. Chow plays a guy who is the greatest gambler in the world. He beats Kenny Rogers all to hell.

10. What Are Your Favorite Cartoons?
Of all time would have to be the Warner Brothers cartoons — Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck. Currently, I watch *Batman & Robin: The Animated* series and *The Tick*.

11. People You Would Most Like To Work With?
Alex Toth, he'd be top of the list. I've been very lucky and have worked with a lot of great guys.

12. Any trademarks to your work?
There's always three action scenes. I always open on action, have some action in the middle, and close with action. There's never one, there's never two, there's never four. Three

13. If you could be any comic book character, which would you be and why?
I'd like to be Doctor Doom! It must be nice to feel as though you're right all the time. I could still put together the costume...

14. Comics You Currently Read?
WOLVERINE, *Superboy*, *Batman Adventures*, *Eightball*, *Savage Dragon* and anything John Byrne does.

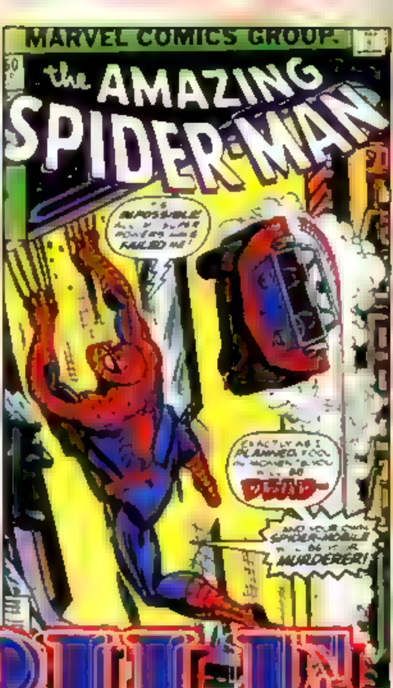
15. Favorite Character?
I most closely sympathize with the Punisher. He's always been the easiest for me to write, and I think there's a lot of depth to Frank Castle that most people never saw.

16. Least Favorite Character?
Aquaman. I always hated him; he's a pale imitation of Sub-Mariner and always will be!

17. Favorite Action Figure/Trading Card/bit of Comics paraphernalia?
When I was a kid, I got a postcard from Stan Lee apologizing for something that I objected to in an issue of DAREDEVIL. He signed it himself! I still have it.

18. Favorite Comics-Related Product Currently On The Market?
The Bane action figure, from the Batman animated series. I had a hand in creating the character and it was neat to see it hanging on the rack.

—Interview conducted by Ruth Morrison,
From the wilds of Pennsylvania to the shores of Kearney, New Jersey

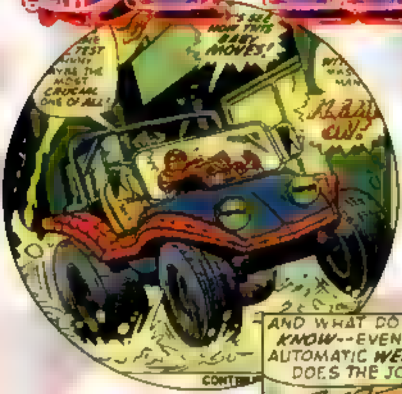


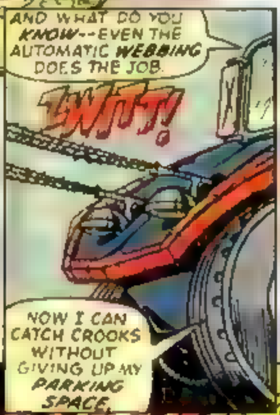
This reject from Wheelie and the Chopper Bunch made its debut in the pages of AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #130! How, you may ask, did such an eyesore come to be? Well, it could only have happened in the swingin' '70s!

It started in AMAZING #126, as Spidey was approached by two advertising executives (bearing an uncanny resemblance to our own Stan "the Man" Lee and "Rascally" Roy Thomas) representing the Corona Motor Company.

Corona Motors was developing a new non-polluting car, and they wanted Spidey to endorse it! Desperate for cash, the wall-crawler agreed to the deal, turning to his old pal Johnny Storm (aka the Human Torch) to design and build the car that could only be called—

SPIDER-MOBILE





The Spider-Mobile was equipped with web-shooters, a spider-signal-light, and an ejector seat. (The Torch commented, "Every hero's car HAS to have an ejector seat!") Oh, yes, did we mention it could also climb walls? Spidey was so excited to own his first car that he took this jalopy for a joyride, only to reveal he had never learned how to drive!

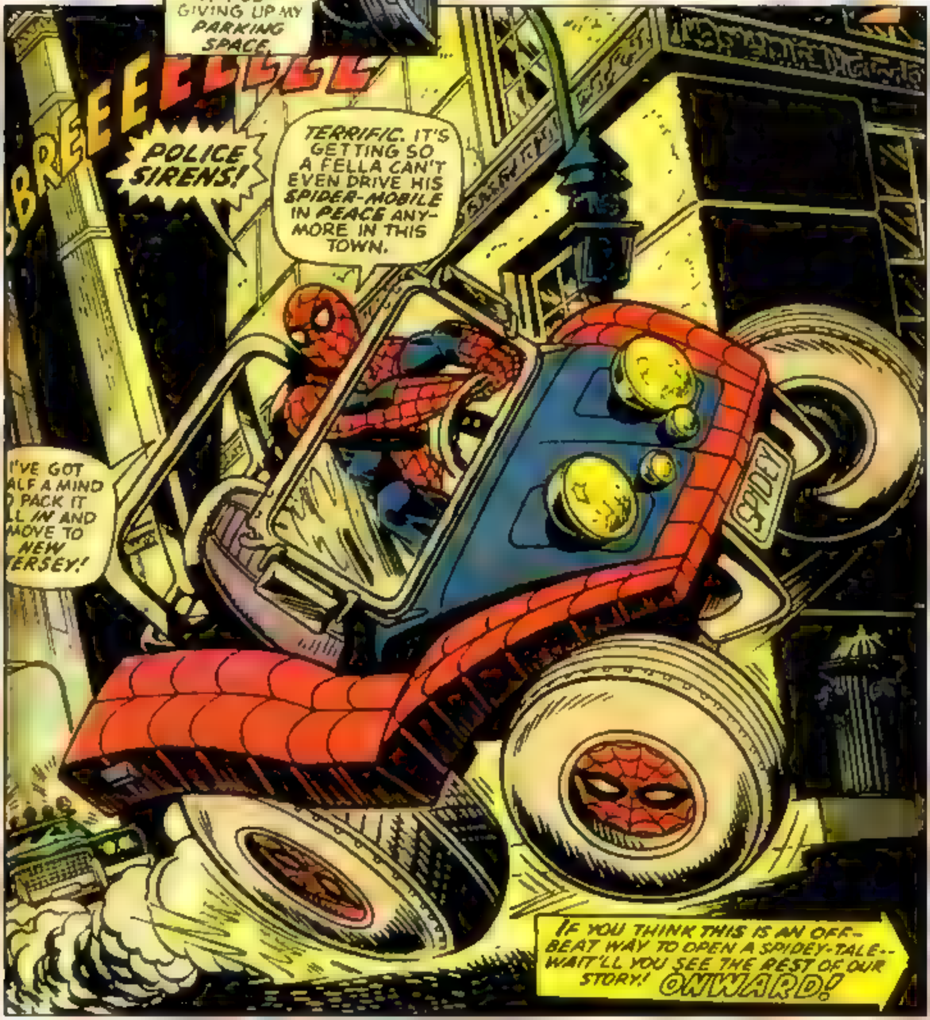
The Spider-Mobile made only a couple of appearances before Spidey accidentally drove it off a pier in ish #141. (Guess those driving lessons might have been a good idea!) But amazingly, that wasn't the end of this infamous lemon!

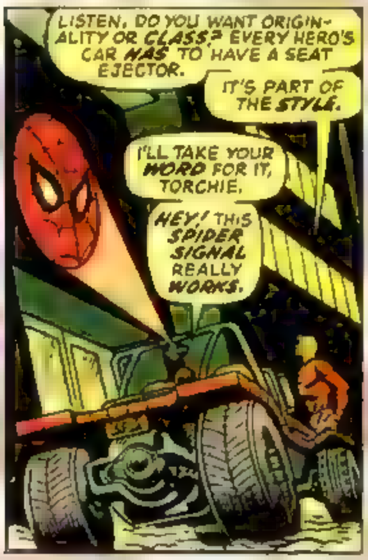
The Arachna-Car appeared one final time in issue #160, as a criminal mastermind called the Terrible Tinkerer hatched the inspired scheme of using Spidey's own set of wheels against him! The Tinkerer fished the Spider-Mobile out of the Hudson River and programmed it to destroy its owner. The issue ended with Spidey victorious over his vehicle in a one-man demolition derby!

Thirty issues after he had first accepted the cash for the deal, Spidey finally delivered the totalled Spider-Mobile to Corona Motors. Thus ended the fiasco of one of Spidey's more "questionable" incidents.

We can only speculate that if Spidey had held on to the car, he would have kept it parked in the Bat-Cave...

—Barry Dutter





DC VS MARVEL
A Trading Card Odyssey

By Matt Morra

"Don't Screw It Up"

Most people start a new job with "welcome aboard, nice to meet you, good luck." On my first day at Fleer as editor of the Marvel trading cards, I was inaugurated with a six-inch-thick manila folder bearing the cryptic label "DC VS. MARVEL" and my new boss's heartfelt greeting: "Hi, here's everything on the crossover. It's the biggest event in trading card history and you're in charge. Don't screw it up. Oh, by the way, we're behind schedule, so hurry." It wasn't even lunchtime yet.

Still hearing my mother's voice in my head saying that I should have gone to medical school, it didn't yet sink in what MARVEL VS. DC was. Several cups of coffee and a peek into the bloated binder had it plunging into my consciousness like the Titanic. DC VS. MARVEL is simply amazing. For the first time in the history of comics, the two biggest names in the industry were going to merge their respective universes of characters for one spectacular crossover event. And that was just the beginning. Fans would participate in the event by voting on who they think should win the major battles. My mind reeled with the possibilities. Superboy and Spider-Man in the same room shaking hands, Batman and the Punisher exchanging tips on removing bloodstains, Superman and Captain America discussing how overrated death is, Scarecrow and Scarecrow arguing copyright laws. Now this is Glasnost! The fan boy in me wanted to jump up and down. The editor in me wanted to jump out the window.

MARVEL VS DC

Now What?

Every card set starts with a checklist—you can't make a card if you don't know what to make. And there, right on top of the myriad letters, lists, memos, dittos, CC's, and EIEIO's my weary eyes spotted a complete one. It seems Fleer had taken the initiative and written up a list to get the ball rolling. It was already sent to DC for their revisions. My job was half finished, I thought; all we had to do was assign the art. I smiled. I laughed. I went to lunch. My fatal flaw was to return. Sitting on my desk was a fax from DC. It was their revision of the checklist—and it was totally, utterly and completely different from ours. My heart sank. In walks Dan Buckley, the bossman.

"What do you think?" he queries.

"I think we're screwed," I moan.

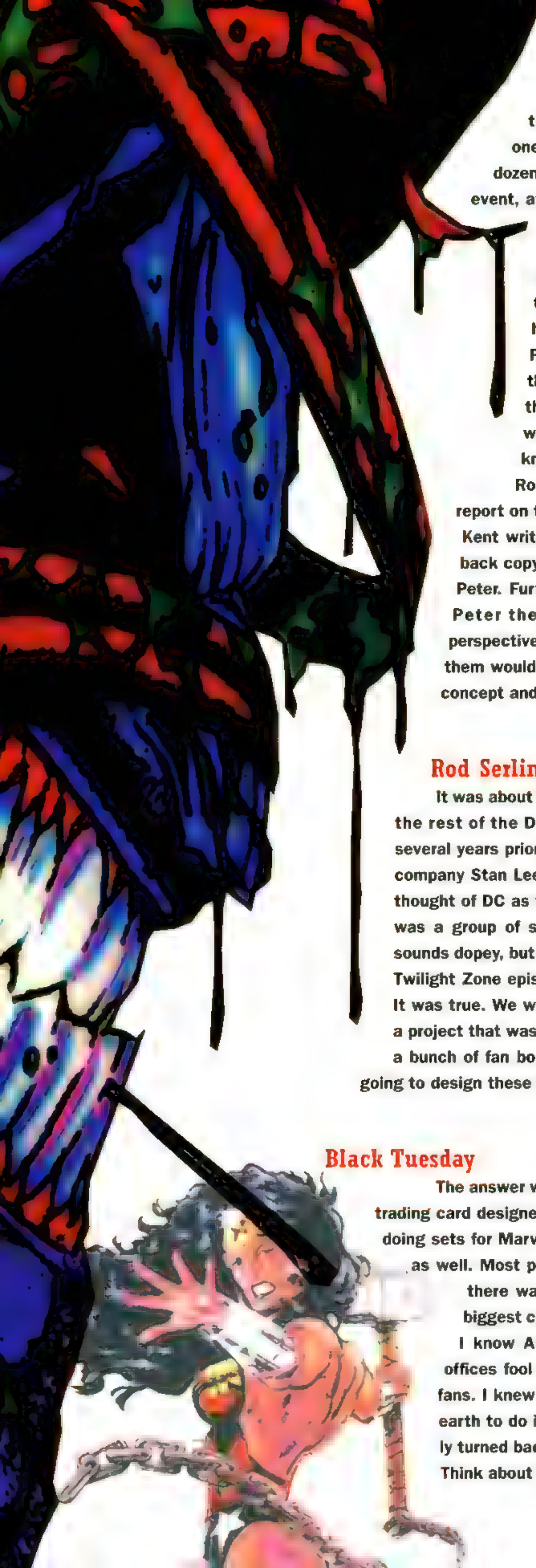
"Agreed," my perceptive superior answers. "Tomorrow we're both going to DC and meet with Stu Seltzer and Larry Daley to discuss it."

Mikhail Gorbachev on David Letterman

Feeling a little like Reagan on his first meeting with Gorbachev, I sat in DC's brand spanking new Broadway offices located across the street from the Ed Sullivan Theater (home to the Late Show with David Letterman), next to Larry Daley, my DC counterpart. Dan and Stu (the Mel Gibson of DC), being the bosses, decided to lock Larry and me alone in the conference room with the admonition that we MUST come up with a checklist. Fast. There was simply no time to argue. So, we rolled up our sleeves, threw out our respective lists and started from scratch.

The whole set is based closely on the event. Only characters in the event will get a card—sorry, Fin Fang Foom fans. (Editor's Note: Check out pages 62 & 63 for more of the fearsome Fin Fang Foom. Twice in one issue. We didn't plan it. Honest.—Tim) The 100 basic card set would have four subsets: hero, villain, battles, and Rival. The Rival cards are the eleven major DC/Marvel hero battles. The chase cards consist of twelve Holo/FX cards (a new technology sort of like a combination of a hologram and prismatic foil etching), eighteen Impact cards (painted and embossed, another first) and two very cool, very rare Lenticular (now you see 'em, now you don't "flicker") cards. Half would be assigned by Marvel, half by DC. The battle cards will be done purely by of luck of the draw, so no arguing over who does what. Characters will be listed on the cards on the basis of who's doing the card (for example, if DC does the Batman vs. Captain America card, Batman gets top billing). Cards will be differentiated by back color—Marvel/red, DC/blue. The whole goal was to be fair, equal and honest. Glasnost in its purest form. We were geniuses.

Not so fast, Einstein, we neglected the backs. Someone had to write



them. The simplest, cleanest, smartest solution was to hire one writer (normally, it isn't unusual to hire as many as a dozen different writers to do a set) who was familiar with the event, available and most importantly, good. Enter Ron Marz. Well known to comic fans, he has written INFINITY WATCH and SILVER SURFER for Marvel and Green Lantern for DC (you'd think with a name like Marz he'd avoid cosmic stuff just so he wouldn't have to stomach stupid jokes). Ron, along with Peter David, was one of the chief architects of the event; though extremely busy (aside from his normal writing and the crossover, his wife just gave birth to a son, Killian), he was intrigued by writing trading cards. His expertise and knowledge immediately proved him invaluable.

Ron knew Clark Kent and Peter Parker could team up to report on the incredible events in a series of newspaper articles with Kent writing and Parker photographing. So, he suggested that the back copy of the cards be in the first-person voice of either Clark or Peter. Further, Clark would speak about the Marvel characters and Peter the DC ones. This way the copy would reflect a fresh perspective on the characters. Readers who weren't familiar with them wouldn't feel left out. It was brilliant. Larry and I both loved the concept and immediately put Ron on the payroll.

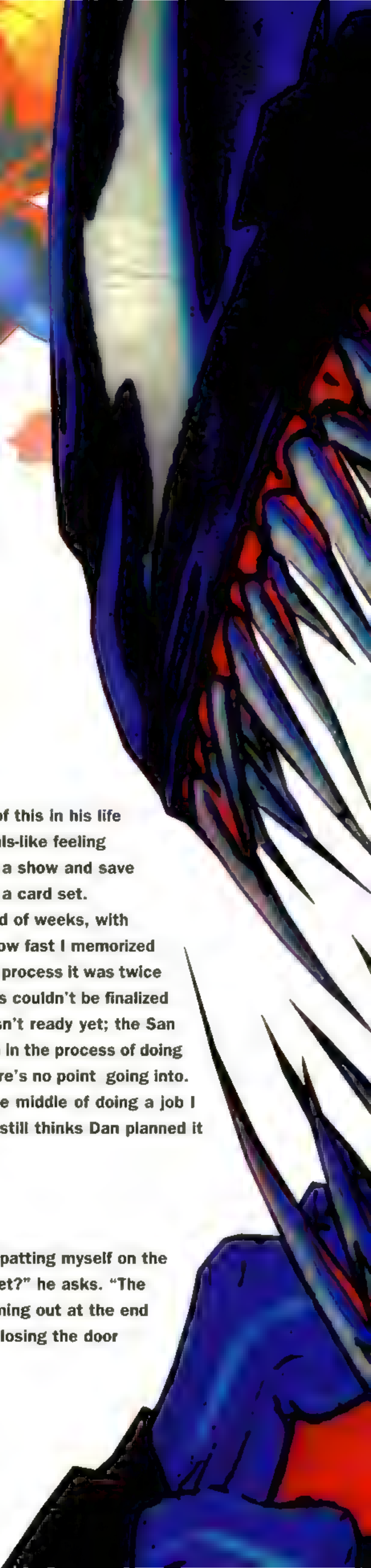
Rod Serling at DC

It was about this time that something hit me about Larry, Jim Spivey and the rest of the DC crew—I liked these guys. As an editor at Marvel for several years prior to the Fleer gig, knee-deep in the friendly rivalry with the company Stan Lee referred to as the "Distinguished Competition," I always thought of DC as this faceless entity. It never occurred to me that behind it was a group of smart, friendly, dedicated, comic professionals. I know it sounds dopey, but the whole time I worked with these guys a line from an old Twilight Zone episode kept running through my head: "They're just like us." It was true. We were in the same business, doing the same job, working on a project that was just too much fun to act like a jerk over. What more could a bunch of fan boys ask? Except, of course, for the next headache—who's going to design these cards?

Black Tuesday

The answer was easy. We needed the best, and Arnie Sawyer is the best trading card designer in the business. Simple, right? Wrong. Arnie was already doing sets for Marvel and DC while in the middle of projects for other clients as well. Most people at DC and Marvel didn't even want to ask him, but there was no way I was going to let anyone but Arnie design the biggest card event in history. Fortunately, I had an ace up my sleeve.

I know Arnie Sawyer. Don't let those trendy, upscale, Manhattan offices fool you, Arnie and his sidekick Sean are major league comic fans. I knew that once he heard about this set, he'd move heaven and earth to do it. I was right and that's exactly what he did. Arnie actually turned back work that he already agreed to do to free up time for us. Think about that—he gave up work and money for us. Now that's a fan.



His one stipulation was that due to the time problem (we had none) we must agree on final designs in a matter of days. Normally it took that long just to make enough Xeroxes for everyone, but we had no choice, he had us. We agreed.

What followed was what I affectionately refer to as Black Tuesday. From 11:00 am to 6:00 pm one hot Tuesday last August, we all sat in Arnie's not-so-spacious, poorly air-conditioned and increasingly shrinking office in the heart of Manhattan's retail floral district, staring at a computer monitor and discussing a series of designs Arnie had prepared in advance.
"I don't like that font, try this one."
"Can you get this a little brighter?"
"What if we turned it sideways?"
"Are we happy, are we happy?"
"Does that look too...designy?"
"Doesn't anybody like design 'A'? I was up all night with that one!"
"Arnie, where's your bathroom?"
All the while, Arnie's fingers flew over the keyboard with a speed that testified he had done far too much of this in his life and should spend more time with his wife and three daughters. A Little Rascals-like feeling pervaded the room. We were all focused on one goal, building sets to put on a show and save the orphanage from bankruptcy. It felt good. By the end of the day we had us a card set.

What sounds like the solution of days actually evolved over a period of weeks, with several more jaunts to DC and numerous phone conversations (it's amazing how fast I memorized Larry's number). Here's a quick rundown of what I didn't mention: the approval process it was twice as complicated as normal and had to be done in half the time; the logo designs couldn't be finalized designs for another month because the now MARVEL "VERSUS" DC logo wasn't ready yet; the San Diego Comic Convention halted all work for a week; the fact that we were both in the process of doing other sets as well, plus all the minor arguments and legal wrangling which there's no point going into.

Looking back, the whole experience was a trial by fire. I was in the middle of doing a job I wasn't even sure how to do yet! Though the Oliver Stone/grassy knoll in me still thinks Dan planned it this way to see if I could cut the mustard, I don't care. The set looks good.

EPILOGUE

So there I was in my shiny new office with my feet up on the desk, patting myself on the back for a job well done when in walks Dan. "What's the status of the next set?" he asks. "The status of what?" I innocently chime in. "You know, the set with DC that's coming out at the end of February." "WHAT?" I blurt. "You better hurry," says my sadistic superior, closing the door behind him, "it's even later than the first set."

You know, medical school is starting to sound better and better.

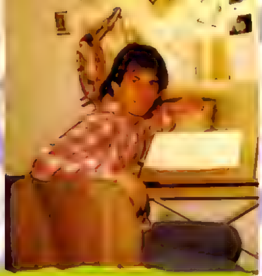
EDGE

RON WAGNER

and daughter NIKKI

Ever wondered what those ponytailed stay-at-homes who draw women with legs longer than the stretch limos they step out of, and men with biceps the size of small European countries really do all day? What's it like to be a talented guy in a tuna-can-sized town? Where do these pencil-chewers see themselves in ten years?

Well, who knows. Like snowflakes and receding hairlines, no two are exactly alike. So we abandoned our grandiose plans to profile a generic comic book artist, and instead tracked down the highly elusive (and hardly generic) Ron Wagner, penciler of the perennially popular **DAREDEVIL** series. Ron, who lives in Illinois with his wife, daughter, dog and pellet gun, shoved his work aside with a grudging sigh, and sang like a 170-lb. canary.



Edge Interview

RON WAGNER TIMELINE

EARLY TO MID-EIGHTIES:
Ron gets his first jobs doing back-up features and issues of *Sergeant Rock* for DC

MID TO LATE EIGHTIES:
Ron begins a long stint on G.I. JOE for Marvel, as well as working on NTH MAN *(another Larry Hama creation)*, and DC's *Hex*.

EARLY NINETIES:
After making a few Sparkle Crest commercials, Ron returns to the wonderful world of comics in the pages of Marvel's MORBIUS. Work for DC includes *Hawkman*, *Batman*, and the *Superman: Year One Annual*.

1995: Ron makes eagerly anticipated comic history by returning Daredevil to his beloved red costume.

HOW TALL ARE YA, RON?
Five foot nine.

SO, RON, WHAT ARE THE PHYSICAL SIMILARITIES BETWEEN YOURSELF AND DAREDEVIL?
Besides both of us having a remarkable capacity for looking grim, there are none.

WERE YOU INTERESTED IN DAREDEVIL BEFORE YOU BEGAN PENCILING THE BOOK?
Oh yeah! A lot of my favorite creators have worked on the book—Frank Miller, David Mazzuchelli, Klaus Janson and Lee Weeks, to name a few.

WHO THE HELL HIRED YOU?
Someone who has been fired since, I'm sure.

IT'S RUMORED THAT YOU'RE TEACHING LOCAL MISFITS (BASICALLY, YOUNGER VERSIONS OF YOURSELF) TO DRAW. TRUE?
Yes. I'm teaching a class in comic art at a local art store. I deal mostly with working from a plot or script, and I stress good, solid storytelling.

JEEZ, YOU'RE SO OLD-FASHIONED! DON'T YOU KNOW THE KIDS JUST WANT TO SEE CHARACTERS SO MUSCLE-BOUND THEY COULDN'T TIE THEIR OWN SHOES?
(Strangling sound).

WHAT'S THE MATTER, RON - IS YOUR TIE CAUGHT IN THE VCR AGAIN?
***(Indignantly)* I'm not wearing a tie for crying out loud!**

WHATEVER. TELL US MORE ABOUT THE CLASSES.
Well, its exciting for me. The kids are great, really enthusiastic, and some of them have real talent! It's tough for them, because there aren't many outlets for that kind of creativity around here, you know?

WHAT DID YOU DRINK FOR BREAKFAST TODAY, RON?
***(excitedly)* Lots of coffee!**
(Sound of knuckles turning white).

GIVE US ONE GOOD REASON WHY WE SHOULDN'T FIRE YOU.
I can't.

LET US SEE YOUR SENSITIVE SIDE, RON. DO YOU PLAY ANY MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OR ANYTHING?
Yes! I play a very good rhythm guitar! I couldn't play lead to save my life. Also, I pretend to sing and write songs.

DOES THIS MEAN YOU'VE DEVELOPED A TOLERABLE LEVEL OF MANUAL DEXTERITY?
It depends on the activity.

DESCRIBE SOME OF YOUR OTHER TALENTS, COWBOY.
Well, I can work up a sweat while standing still!

RON, ARE YOU GOING TO BE WORKING IN A FOUNDRY TEN YEARS FROM NOW?
It's my dream.

OKAY, ILLINOIS, HAVE YOU EVER MILKED A COW?
No...*(Ron happily goes on to make a completely rude and totally unprintable remark).*

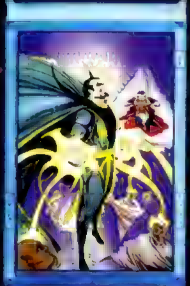
WEREN'T YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR A GRAIN-ELEVATOR EXPLOSION IN YOUR YOUNGER YEARS?
Younger years! What are you implying, that I'm some kind of doddering old man with nothing to look forward to but diluted Enfamil and a flimsily-padded casket?

NO, NO. WE WERE JUST IMPLYING THAT YOU BLEW UP A STRUCTURE THAT REPRESENTED THE MAIN LIVELIHOOD OF YOUR HOME STATE.
***(Relieved)* Oh. No, I just shot some of the windows out. *(Then, in the same tones in which a man might recall his honeymoon, or a particularly good meal)* But I've been in a car that flipped over!**

Apart from his apparent penchant for participating in auto accidents, Ron also enjoys horseback riding, camping, and making collect calls to people he doesn't really know.

DAREDEVIL #350

J.M. DeMatteis/Ron Wagner/Bill Reinhold This double-sized issue is gonna burn the snow right off the sidewalk outside your local comic store! The world's biggest (and blindest) redhot is back in New York City—and he's unwittingly brought the Chaste back with him! This 48-page smart bomb also features the alarmingly hot and outrageously sexy Elektra! (Shipping 1/2/96)

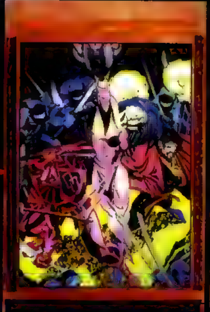


DOCTOR STRANGE #87

J. M. DeMatteis/Mark Buckingham/Kev F. Sutherland The spell-casting finale of the "Homecoming" story line. After a brief stop in Tibet, Doc tracks his evil nemesis, Baron Mordo, to Germany. There, in the land of dark beer and hot wienerschnitzel, Doc discovers a fantaswtic secret—the key to his becoming at last...the Perfect Master of the Mystic Arts! Oh come on! The guy can change people's fingers into forks! Aren't you curious to know what more he could possibly want? (Shipping 1/30/96)

DOC SAMSON #3

Dan Slott/Ken Lashley/Tom Wegrzyn The world's only hunky green-haired shrink needs some time alone! He tries to score it at convicted killer Crazy Eight's grave, but winds up face-to-gun barrel with the Punisher! After a heated argument over capital punishment (remember, Doc helped send Frank to the chair), the Punisher offers to help the good doctor make a human quilt out of psycho-killer Patchwork, sewing with Detonator bullets instead of needles! Home Ec was never like this! (Shipping 1/16/96)

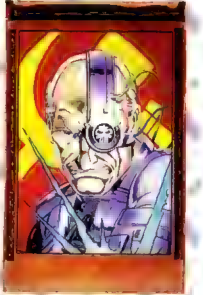


WHAT IF #83

Ian Edginton/Rafael Kayanan "What if Daredevil was a Disciple of Dr. Strange?" Doc goes not to the Ancient One, by to the Chaste way back when. And Matt Murdock was trained not by the Chaste, but by the Hand! And when DD won't turn over to the good side, Strange's new pupil moves in for thee kill—and her name is Elektra! (Shipping 1/16/96)

INCREDIBLE HULK #439

Peter David/Angel Medina/Robin Riggs The biggest bang for your Edge line buck this month! "Scapegoat" winds up the four-part "Ghosts of the Future" series. Actually, that's putting it mildly—this issue isn't just the wind-up;it's the pitch,it's the home run, it's the whole dang game! With the world on the brink of war, and evil favorite whom Hulk fans thought was just a hated memory, steps forward and claims responsibility. The world's forces unite to blow this megalomaniac off the face of the planet...don't they? Not an issue for the faint of heart or the weak of kidney. (Shipping 1/16/96)



PUNISHER #5

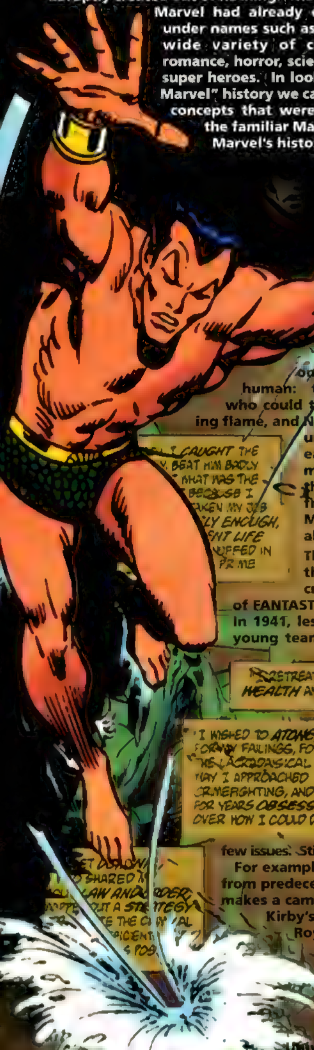
John Ostrander/Tom Lyle/Chris Ivy The first of an explosive two-part story line featuring the return of Rosalie Carbone! New York City's Mafia bosses are mad as a bunch of June brides left at the altar over the Punisher's appointment to head the powerful Geraci family. Guest starring the Russian mafiya and Firefox, and featuring the kidnapping of a teen-aged girl! This issue is packed with more action than a disco full of monkeys! Don't miss it! (Shipping 1/16/96)

GHOST RIDER #71

Ivan Velez Jr./Salvador Larocca/Sergio Melia Seized by an intense and inexplicable urge to inhale bus fumes, the man with the flaming melon shifts into overdrive and roars off to the Bronx! Nobody's particularly happy to have the six-foot sterno can in the neighborhood, though...and it shows! But if anybody's equipped to fight fire with fire, it's our man Ghosty! New writer Ivan Velez Jr. (a native of said borough himself) sets the pages of this issue ablaze with a startling new story line! (Shipping 1/9/96)

OVER THE EDGE #5

Ivan Velez Jr./Stephen B. Jones This month, 99 cents gets you the Punisher and all the fire-power he can fit into a phonebooth! Heck, that's less than it would cost to hire his look-alike for a bachelor party! (Shipping 1/23/96)



Welcome to the first installment of a column that will trace the high points of the history of Marvel Comics from the very beginning. What Stan Lee has dubbed "the Marvel Age of Comics" began with FANTASTIC FOUR #1 in 1961. But Marvel as we now know it was not abruptly created out of nothing. The comics company now known as Marvel had already existed for over twenty years under names such as Timely and Atlas, publishing a wide variety of comics: Westerns, romance, horror, science fiction, and, yes, super heroes. In looking back over "pre-Marvel" history we can see characters and concepts that were the forerunners of the familiar Marvel heroes of today.

Marvel's history began explosively with the release of MARVEL COMICS #1 in 1939 (which Marvel reprinted in hardcover in 1990). The book starred the original Human Torch, created by Carl Burgos, and the Torch's future nemesis, Namor the Sub-Mariner, created by Bill Everett. These two characters were startlingly different from other super heroes created in these early years. For one thing, neither was truly human: the Torch was an android who could turn into a creature of living flame, and Namor was the prince of an undersea race, with pointed ears like a demon. Even more significantly, at first they were both alienated from humanity; the Sub-Mariner, in fact, declared a one-man war on the human race for its alleged depredations against his people.

The concept of the alienated hero proved essential to the Marvel of the 1960s, and thus it is no wonder that Stan Lee and Jack Kirby created a new Torch and revived the Sub-Mariner in the early issues of FANTASTIC FOUR.

In 1941, less than a year before America entered World War II, the brilliant young team of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby created comics' leading patriotic hero Captain America, as well as his partner, Bucky, and his eternal nemesis, the Red Skull. Appropriately, Captain America has since been one of Marvel's flagship characters. Jack Kirby, of course, would go on to become one of the primary creative forces behind the Marvel of the 1960s. Another of the founding fathers of '60s Marvel, Stan Lee, first began writing for Marvel with CAPTAIN AMERICA.

During the 1940s, Timely, like its rival comics companies, came up with an enormous number of costumed characters within a relatively short time. None of them rivaled the popularity of the "big three," and some lasted no more than a few issues. Still, a number of them have relevance to the Marvel of today.

For example, some of today's familiar Marvel heroes inherited their names from predecessors in the Golden Age, such as the original Black Widow (who makes a cameo appearance in the closing scene of MARVELS #1). Simon and Kirby's Golden Age Vision was an eerie visitor from another dimension; Roy Thomas and John Buscema based the modern day Vision on his memorable forebear, though Stan Lee had Roy make the new Vision an android rather than a supernatural entity.

MARVEL COMICS #1 also starred the first Angel, a mustachioed but wingless costumed crimefighter. Oddly enough, in recent years Peter David and Mark Gruenwald both wrote stories about the original Angel's fate in the modern day Marvel Universe. Peter made him into a homeless man, still surprisingly athletic, who defends his underground community, in CLOAK and DAGGER and HULK whereas Mark made him an enfeebled millionaire who funded vigilantes in the USAGENT limited series. The contradiction was resolved when the two Angels were pronounced brothers who had shared their costumed identity.

by Peter Sanderson

In the 1970s Roy revived numerous Golden Age heroes in THE INVADERS, a Marvel series set during the second World War. Among them was the Destroyer, Stan Lee's first major super hero creation, a ruthless warrior fighting behind enemy lines; he was like a 1940s Punisher unleashed against the Nazis. Marvel has subsequently used the name "Destroyer" time and again, most notably for Odin's indestructible robot in THOR and for Adam Warlock's ally Drax the Destroyer. In his more recent INVADERS limited series Roy brought back the original Vision as well as the Blazing Skull, whose visual design clearly inspired the Ghost Rider.

A few other '40s heroes have popped up in surprising places lately: notably, John Byrne revived the Blonde Phantom as the She-Hulk's pudgy but good-humored confidant.

Although super heroes were the mainstay of the comics industry of the 1940s, other genres thrived as well. The adventures of teenager Patsy Walker go all the way back to 1945. After her comic finally ended decades later she evolved into the Marvel super heroine known as Hellcat. Some of Marvel's longest running Western heroes also debuted in the 1940s, including Kid Colt and the Rawhide Kid, both of whom were sharpshooters whom the law had unjustly condemned as outlaws, thus fitting into the traditional Marvel motif of heroes at odds with society.

By the beginning of the 1950s America's initial infatuation with costumed heroes had run its course; all of Timely's super heroes vanished.

The Marvel Chronicles

Chapter 1: Before The Fantastic Four, 1939-1961

Several years later a brief but unsuccessful attempt was made to revive the big three. In the 1970s writer Steve Englehart "revealed" the rabidly anti-Communist Captain America to have been an impostor; the "Bucky" impostor who was his partner became the character now known as Nomad.

The 1950s produced three minor classics of lasting value for Marvel readers. First and foremost was THE BLACK KNIGHT by Stan Lee and artist Joe Maneely, a short-lived series set in the days of King Arthur, that managed to integrate the costumed hero motif into a world inspired by Prince Valiant. Sir Percy of Scandia, who posed as a harmless fop but fought evildoers as the helmeted Black Knight, was the ancestor of Dane Whitman, the Black Knight of today's Avengers.

MARVEL BOY had been raised on the planet Uranus and returned to his native Earth to battle crime with his superhuman abilities. Though his series lasted a mere two issues, Roy Thomas revived him as a villain in FANTASTIC FOUR; Quasar inherited Marvel Boy's costume and powers, and Justice of the New Warriors originally went by Marvel Boy's name.

The other 50s series of note was THE YELLOW CLAW, a politically incorrect thriller in the mode of Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu novels, whose title villain would in the 1960s become one of the most memorable adversaries for SHIELD Director Nick Fury.

By the late 1950s and 1960s the pieces were all in place for the creation of the Marvel of today. Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and Steve Ditko were collaborating on stories for STRANGE TALES, TALES OF SUSPENSE, TALES TO ASTONISH and JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY, series that would soon become showcases for the Marvel heroes of the 1960s. At this point, however, Stan and his collaborators were mostly turning out short science fiction stories, in the style of 1950s B-movies, with twist endings. Their most distinctive work of this period was their monster stories, featuring an unending parade of gigantic creatures with names like Googam, Son of Goom, the Blip, and, unforgettably, the talking, diapered dragon Fin Fang Foom. The stories now have a decided camp value, redeemed by the dynamic power of the artwork by Kirby and Ditko.

That art demonstrated that its creators were clearly capable of turning their talents to greater things. All that Lee, Kirby, and Ditko needed was the go-ahead to create a new line of super heroes, as you shall see in our next installment.

TIME SLIP is a new series offering the chance to see how the original Marvel Universe would look if first designed by today's hot creators.

IT'S 1961 AGAIN... AND STAN LEE HAS JUST HAD A NEW IDEA!

THIS TIME: A COMIC BOOK FEATURING FOUR COSMIC RAY-EMPOWERED INDIVIDUALS WITH FANTASTIC POWER. HE WANTS TO CALL IT...THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

YOUR NAME IS KELLEY JONES. YOU'VE DRAWN BATMAN. DEADMAN. AND SANDMAN. BUT THIS IS DIFFERENT. THIS IS STAN "THE MAN." AND MARVEL COMICS IS ABOUT TO BE BORN.

"NOW, KELLEY. THIS IS HOW IT WORKS. THESE SCIENTISTS, LED BY A BIG-BRAINED HEAD HONCHO BY THE NAME OF REED RICHARDS, SNEAK ONTO A TOP SECRET MILITARY BASE IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT AND LAUNCH AN EXPERIMENTAL ROCKET INTO THE OUTER REACHES OF THE GALAXY. ABOARD THIS ROCKET ARE REED RICHARDS; HIS GIRLFRIEND, SUSAN STORM; HER KID BROTHER, A REAL HOT-HEAD, JOHNNY STORM; AND A PILOT WHO JUST HAPPENS TO BE RICHARDS' BEST FRIEND. THE PILOT'S NAME IS BEN GRIMM AND HE'S THE ONLY ONE OPPOSED TO THIS MISSION. PROBLEM IS, HE'S GOT A DEVASTATING CRUSH ON THE STORM WOMAN, TOO. SO WHEN SHE SUGGESTS HE MAY BE A COWARD FOR NOT WANTING TO GO ALONG, HE IGNORES HIS OWN PREMONITIONS OF DISASTER AND THEIR DESTINIES ARE THROWN TO THE WHIMS OF THE UNIVERSE.

"THE SHIP'S SHIELDS, JUST AS GRIMM FEARED, ARE NO MATCH FOR THE CATASTROPHIC CALAMITY, THE RAMBUNCTIOUS RADIATION THAT OVERTAKES THEM. THE VESSEL AND ALL WITHIN ARE BOMBARDED BY CATACLYSMIC COSMIC RAYS AND FORCED TO CRASH-LAND BACK ON EARTH. SEEMINGLY, EVERYONE ABOARD IS SAFE. BUT APPEARANCES ARE DECEIVING, KELLEY. THEIR BODIES HAVE BEEN SATURATED WITH THE DREADED COSMIC RAYS. THEY'VE BECOME MUTATIONS OF THEIR FORMER SELVES. RICHARDS FINDS HIS BODY NOW HAS FANTASTIC ELASTIC PROPERTIES. SUE STORM CAN TURN INVISIBLE. HER HOTHEADED BROTHER CAN TURN TO FLAME LIKE THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH. AND GRIMM...HE'S THE WORST OF THEM ALL. THE RAYS CHANGE HIM INTO A TERRIBLE MONSTER...HE'S BEEN TURNED INTO...A THING.

"NOW KELLY, I KNOW THE TENDENCY WILL BE TO LOOK AT WHAT'S BEEN DONE BEFORE. BUT I DON'T WANT YOU TO DO THAT. PEOPLE CAN'T HAVE EVER SEEN THIS...THING...BEFORE. IT'S GOT TO FREAK THEM OUT. AND IT'S GOT TO SCARE THEM AND AT THE SAME TIME MAKE THEM SORRY FOR THE BIG GUY.

"SHOW ME SOME SKETCHES THIS AFTERNOON. I WANT A FINISHED PIECE TOMORROW MORNING. I WANT THE THING!"

X-NATION 2099

"There's been a prophecy that a Mutant Messiah will arise and straighten out the world for misfits and outcasts, and there are good people and bad people who believe that the messiah is one of these kids."

SAINTS IN THE CITY: THE KIDS OF X-NATION

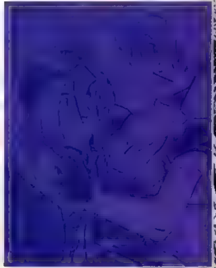
So says Tom Peyer, of the upcoming book, X-NATION 2099. "[They're] mutants at the end of the road. Kids with no future—unless they can make one for themselves. Spunky, passionate, bright, funny, impulsive spirits who deserved to be born in a better world. They have nowhere to go but Halo City—the sovereign nation for outcasts of all kinds–and no one to trust but each other."

Halo City, 2099. Doom promised that his presidency would effect great change in the United States and the world of 2099. A safe haven for all of mutantkind. John Francis Moore's X-MEN 2099 have been working the streets of Halo City trying to make Halo City live up to their own dream of a city-state for mutantkind.

But one of the X-Men knows something the others don't. She knows about the prophesied messiah... because she can feel it.

"Shakti's 'resignation' from the X-Men will create a vacuum in the group. Shakti has always been the backbone support of the group. Her move will be seen as a betrayal by some of the X-Men," says X-MEN 2099 writer John Francis Moore.

"Shakti is hip to the Mutant Messiah prophecy. She wants to nurture the Messiah, to help bring about the final victory for outcasts that's promised in the prophecy. She also comes to really care about these kids, and her psychic empathy for mutants helps forge a deep bond," says Peyer.



Shakti won't be alone in her duties as schoolmarm to these kids; joining her in her efforts, though for greatly different reasons, is Morphine Somers. Originally introduced as Minister of Humanity in DOOM 2099, Morphine wound up in Halo City after Doom's fall from power and Herod's mutant-hating policy-making.

"Morphine—a truly lovable Warren Ellis creation who was a Halo City big shot when Doom was running things and is now a nobody—sees the Messiah as his ticket back to political power. He horns in on Shakti's mission among the kids and does everything he can to undermine her bond with them.

"They're like the good mom and the dysfunctional dad. They help keep the group together, for different reasons. Sometimes it works. Sometimes he fools them. But usually it's pretty plain that Morphine personally can't stand the kids and that Shakti cares deeply," says Peyer.

The kids, more of a troop than a team, are brought together by Shakti who feels it is her mission and responsibility to find and hone the skills of the "Messiah" before Herod can find and destroy him or her.

"Herod is very interested in these kids. He's hip to the prophecy that foretells the coming of the Mutant Messiah, and the smart money says the Messiah is one of our kids."

Like any group of kids who have been given pariah treatment by society, they resent authority and adult intervention. They must exist in a world created and destroyed by adults, and survive, and still remain kids.

"To different degrees, each believes in the Halo City dream of a safe place for misfits—but they know it's not a guarantee yet. Halo City is a work in progress that can end

up being [either] paradise or just another disappointment. They know their best hope is to stick together," says Peyer. "The kids realize that they're going to have to find ways to run their own lives together, or they'll be lost as individuals. Complicating this is their innate decency. Despite appearances, they're pretty idealistic down deep. They instinctively help others, and this can prevent them from helping themselves.

"They interact like a family," explains Peyer. "They're together because it's a hostile world and they have no better options. When we first see them, they're living in a Halo City runaway shelter. They naturally gravitate to each other, and they even more naturally get each other into trouble.

"In DC's *Legion of Super-Heroes*, I'm dealing with a utopian future; it has its problems, but humanoid life has surfed the wave of technological progress to a virtual paradise of neat gadgets and fun adventure. I like that future; it's naive in the best sense of the word. In 2099 I get to work the other side of the street. The hell which some of us suspect that consumer society is creating on present-day earth—environmental catastrophe, concentration of political power into private hands. The 2099 future is closer to what I expect to happen in the world, alas."

The Fourth Estate

2099 books have traditionally had some of the top writers at their helms. Peter (SPIDER-MAN 2099) David, John Francis Moore, Warren (DOOM 2099) Ellis are just a few of the talented creators who have had their shots at the future world of Marvel. These writers have brought their vast wealth of knowledge beyond comics to their stories, making their characters rich and the Universe complex. John Moore and Warren Ellis have recently combined their talents on DOOM 2099 and X-MEN 2099 in the X-NATION crossover and with that dynamic in place, it was natural to introduce X-NATION, the team, and Tom Peyer, the writer, into the eye of the storm.

How did Tom he wind up writing X-NATION 2099?

"It's becoming a familiar story in the comics industry: try to get Mark Waid, settle for Tom Peyer," he says laughing. "Mark told Joey [Cavalieri] that I might be interested, and Joey invited me to propose a series. Joey and I have known each other for years—my time as a D.C. Editor coincided with the end of his 100 years there—and we always hit it off... Until now.

"So I wrote the proposal, and it turned out to be one of the few cases on record where the proposal was bounced but the writer was hired. I guess Marvel saw something in me: a certain pathos, an incurable helplessness. Clearly, I need Magnanimous Marvel's close supervision to just stay alive," he jokes. "Which is not to say that the proposal was worthless. The situation wasn't what they were looking for, but they bought the characters."

Introducing a second X-book to the world of 2099 will take a lot of collaboration to begin with as both books will be taking place in Halo City for the time being. A relationship between the two 2099 X-writers is a necessary element.

"Fortunately John Moore has created Halo City, which makes the whole setup even more interesting. We now have a ray of believable hope, and a place to ask questions that might have bearing on our own situation even as they entertain. What can be done to reverse the slide into technological hell? Are political solutions possible anymore? What about all of the nasty, civilization-stabilizing business we depend upon Big Brother for [like executing criminals; like espionage]? Do we really want to do these things ourselves, or are there alternatives?"

"I like X-Men 2099 a lot. Unfortunately for John Moore, he and I see the world in similar terms," Peyer laughs. "He's managed to pack that book with a lot of great social ideas and a real alternative edge. And he created the setting for my book, for which I would like to publicly offer him my undying appreciation and no money. I think our teams would blend well together."

Mutant Crossings

Since the kids of X-NATION and the current team of X-MEN are in Halo City and one of the
teams has had someone leave to go over to the new team, the obvious question remains, will there be a crossover?

"Conditions exist for the two groups to be at odds," says Peyer. The X-Men are the Halo City protectorate, and the kids raise a lot of hell. But there is fertile ground for cooperation, too. Both groups believe in the same ideals."

"The two groups will definitely cross paths in Halo City," Moore says. "But their meetings are in no way guaranteed to be harmonious. The X-Men are doing everything they can to maintain a semblance of order in the city, and X-Nation is a powder keg of raging hormonal impulses and untested mutant power."

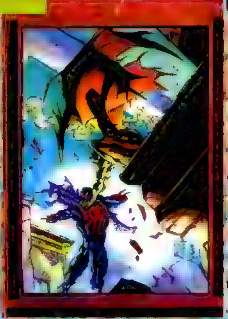
"The X-Men view the kids in X-Nation ambivalently; while they know that Clarion and the gang are simply testing every possible adolescent boundary, their powers make them more than a nuisance," says Moore. "Further, with the exception of Clarion who idolizes the X-Men, the other X-Nation characters view the X-Men as authority figures to be avoided. Remember that the characters in X-Nation are not the junior woodchuck version of the X-Men—they aren't looking to graduate into the older team.

"You'll see individual members of the group intersect at first. As time goes on, I'd like to establish friendships and antipathies between different members of each group. The two books won't be attached at the hip. I think Tom and I are both waiting for a real important and organic story idea before we do a full on, no holds barred, you must read this crossover.

"I'm looking forward to seeing X-NATION come to life. Tom's writing details the wild side of adolescence. X-Nation will offer another perspective on what it means to be a mutant in 2099."

It's hard to be a kid in the city.

—Lia Pelosi



SPIDER-MAN 2099 # 41

Peter David/Andrew Wildman/Bill Sienkiewicz
It's the battle of the bad guys: Goblin 2099 vs. Vulture 2099! After the death of Dana, Spidey's out for revenge, so get the @#*% out of his way! Peter David, one of *Wizard's* "Top Ten Hottest Writers" strikes again!
(Shipping 1/9/96)

GHOST RIDER 2099 # 23

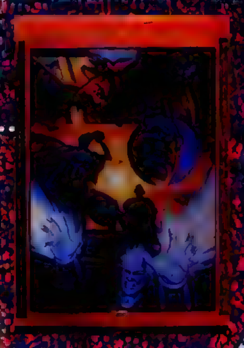
Len Kaminski/Ashley Wood/Jim Daly
Transverse City is hit by a mental hurricane thanks to Psyclone—the toxic product of a mind rescued from the vault of forbidden sciences! It's a B-Movie on amphetamines!
(Shipping 1/16/96)

DOOM 2099 # 39

Warren Ellis/John Buscema
"X-Nation 2099"
The "X-Nation 2099" crossover continues with the X-Men 2099! Countdown to "Fast Forward," an upcoming storyline that will be the most important turn of events to this and all the 2099 titles! Continued in X-MEN 2099 #30!
(Shipping 1/16/96)

X-MEN 2099 : OASIS

John Francis Moore/Tim & Greg Hildebrandt
A FULLY-PAINTED X-MEN 2099 ADVENTURE BY THE BROTHERS HILDEBRANDT! The award-winning art team that brought you the original Star Wars poster & the Marvel Masterworks 1994 card set take on the mighty mutants! This 48-page book-shelf stars the whole group and ties into current X-MEN 2099 continuity.
(Shipping 1/16/96)



X-NATION 2099 #1

Tom Peyer/Humberto Ramos/Jimmy Palmiotti
THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF MUTANTS! The kids of X-Nation come together—but who is the Mutant Messiah? What is he/she capable of? And can Shakti & Morphine whip this rambunctious pack of teens into shape before Herod sinks his claws into them? You like GENERATION X? Then you'll dig these new mutants—and the art of Humberto (*Impulse*) Ramos and Jimmy (*Ash*) Palmiotti!
(Shipping 1/9/96)

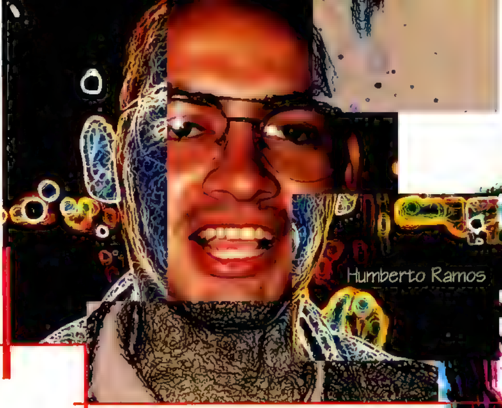
X-MEN 2099 #30

John Francis Moore/Ron Lim/Harry Candelario
The "X-Nation" storyline continues! Who will join the X-Men & who's outta' here? Just what are X-Nation's Nostromo & Clarion doing? And how will the team deal with the fact that one of their own is leaving to take care of those snot-nosed X-kids?
(Shipping 1/23/96)

FANTASTIC FOUR 2099 #3

Karl Kesel/Matt Ryan/Al Williamson
Wasted from their battles, the FF could get terminated by Total Recall! Can they find safety in an old S.H.I.E.L.D. head-quarters? Plus: Chimera's jealousy of Sue becomes a fatal attraction! Karl (*Adventures of Superman*) Kesel continues the future world's greatest comic!
(Shipping 1/30/96)

X-NATION Sketchbook



Humberto Ramos

NOSTROMO

Nostromo is a tragic figure; every time he gets hurt, his injuries "heal" as machine parts and no one has been able to tell him why. He fears most of all his brain turning into a machine and having his consciousness possibly die. He's dependent on Clarion for support of all kinds. Clarion needs to be needed, but in the end, this bond only encourages Nostromo's feeling of helplessness.

RIOT

"Sam Kinison crossed with John Belushi in *Animal House* and exaggerated to the nth degree," says Peyer. "He's the bull, and the world is the china shop. Even his teammates cringe when they see him coming." He has the ability to temporarily absorb mass and strength from his immediate surroundings.

WARBIRD

Warbird discovered at an early age that he had the ability to channel or become possessed by the spirit of a warrior of hostile alien race. The possessing spirit looks like the Angel of Death, hence the name Warbird.

BLACKSMITH

An extremely bright and inventive character. A social butterfly, he likes to just hang out. He has the ability to forge metals together, adhering them as crude weapons. He can seam walls together, creating a maze for an adversary, a shield, a missile, anything.

CARAVAN

Can transport objects, but he's too fast for his own good. His team mates are are trying to teach him to use his powers on living things as well as just objects.

CLARION

The self-proclaimed leader of the group, Clarion feels a personal responsibility in keeping the kids together. He uses all of his abilities to inspire, infuriate, sell, nag and preach to the others the importance of being a team. It follows that he possesses the mutant ability to transmute sound into force.

WULFF

Scared and hateful of himself, Wulff exists in a "Catch 22". His power and ability are directly dependent on and connected to the natural world; he has an absolute animal ferocity about him, but he loathes it. Being a child of 2099 and all the advanced technology, he wants to remove that connection but can't. "He's scared of his power and he hates himself," says Peyer. "Wulff is the anti-Nostromo; he'd much rather be turning into a machine than a snarling beast."

DECEMBER

December is the most experienced kid in the group. She's dealt with adults and authority, and she's also the most distrustful. "Our working class goddess," says Peyer. Her powers are the ability to flash-freeze objects and make them crumble under their own weight.

TWILIGHT

A control freak, Twilight gives Clarion the hardest time when it comes to his leadership. She can generate a small field, her "Sphere of Influence" and controls all natural laws

WILLOW

Willow is a changeling, able to imitate forms and powers. However, being young and still learning, she can't control much of it. Her personality often gets confused in a world where there is so much tactile information. Should she copy a villain in battle, she might end up seeing things from the villain's point of view.

The characters of X-Nation come alive thanks to the phenomenal talents of penciler Humberto Ramos and his unique and often innocent style. His characters are full of humor and each has a wonderful individual look.

"Humberto is a genius! Writers always say this, but I mean it: I'm a big fan of his work on DC's *Impulse* and was delighted to hear that he'll be drawing X-NATION 2099. I did a *Flash* job with him last year, and it was nothing but fun. When I saw the penciled pages, I could hear his characters speaking the dialogue. I just had to transcribe it. So already my job is easy... Thanks, Joey!" said Tom Peyer.

ENTER ASKANI'SON

In January, Marvel will be travelling into the future to show you the past. That is, Nathan Dayspring's past. Which, of course, is our future. So to speak. "It's a bit large," admits Lisa Patrick, Editor of the upcoming ASKANI'SON limited series. "It's actually a very clear story. This child is born and sent into the future by his father Scott Summers because of a disease. He's come back a few times and is now here to stay, for now at least. What we're doing is going back in time [actually in the future] and retelling some of his earlier experiences. It's a little mind-boggling, but I think it's also fascinating to see. In this story, we're seeing that there's a whole new element that affects his being a warrior and a leader and that's the Askani.

What's interesting is that readers have seen these characters before in different places having different relationships but it's always connected. This gives new insight into X-Men history."

"ASKANI'SON is really the next chapter in the life of young Cable. In THE ADVENTURES OF CYCLOPS AND PHOENIX we saw Cable being raised by his parents, Scott and Jean, from the time he was a baby to probably age twelve. This series is a coming of age story for Cable a few years after that time. *The world that Nathan is growing up in has changed dramatically since the fall of Apocalypse. A new power has risen from the vacuum and there's a new danger. Fortunately, there's also new*

companions and alliances. At this point, it's Nate on the road to his destiny."

Resident X-pert Scott Lobdell will be plotting the series with Jeph Loeb providing the dialogue. Scott is primarily responsible for establishing and creating the world Cable grew up in. Says Lisa, "Scott has put an incredible amount of thought into creating the structure of this world. He has made these characters real and given a lot of thought as to how this culture is structured. It's not just 'Let's set these same characters in the future with some cool flying cars.' He's really worked to put dimension into the universe."

"This series begins Cable's learning in the ways of the Askani," explains Scott. "What we're doing is flushing him out and showing people how much they don't know about him and where he's from." Following the fall of Apocalypse at the end of the Cyclops and Phoenix limited series, a Neo-Technological revolution occurred bringing a group calling themselves the Cannanites into power. "The Cannanites originally started out as immediate disciples of Apocalypse. With Apocalypse temporarily gone, their goal was to create an environment that would allow him to return. But now as they are getting a taste of power, they're really in a hurry to have him dominate them. Essentially what the Askani'son is going to have to deal with is not only disciples of Apocalypse, but disciples with ambition."

So how does this younger Cable compare to the man we see in the pages of X-Force as well as in his monthly series? According to Jeph Loeb, readers can gain insight into both characters by comparing, "the difference between Cable, the young man shown here who is fighting for a cause he believes he can win, and Cable, the man who has lived that life and seen the terrible cost of it. That changes a person. The decisions Cable makes now are based on the losses he's experienced."

One of the major plots in the series involves Cable loosing his wife Jenscott in battle For the **first** **time** readers will be able to see the relationship that has heavily impacted Cable from beginning to end. Other characters and relationships explored in the ASKANI'SON series include: the Professor, Blaquesmith, and Tetherblood, all major players in Cable's history that have been effectively down played in the pages of the regular books.

Since the series actually takes place over a period of four years, the stories had to be approached from an unusual angle. "From a writing point of view, it's a very bizarre story to tell," **explains** **Scott** Lobdell. "Traditionally, the way you hook readers is by giving them the cliff hangers at the end of an issue but it's almost impossible to write a cliffhanger that is going to carry over a year later...It's all very different. The advantage is that when you tell a story that takes place two thousand years in the future, you can pretty much do what you want."

As a result, the project became quite a challenge for the writing team. Explains Jeph, "We sort of had to create a whole new religion. The Askani way of life has certain beliefs and ways of living and philosophies about life. It all translates down to the world and its population. It must all be familiar but not quite recognizable to work."

Visually, this is where Gene Ha takes over. "Gene is completely out of control," says Lisa Patrick. "On this project, it's not about building something that looks like Xavier's mansion, it's about creating a whole new world, and Gene really has the type of imagination that encompasses **a world** view. His imagination is what gives the **Askani** world the visual feeling that it has."

Gene claims the secret lies in "not compromising on any piece of what is drawn. Just not make it look like our world. There again are no limitations because this is the future and a new dimension. It gives me complete freedom to do whatever I'm inspired to. There's things floating in the air, mile-high trees, and people transformed by futuristic diseases."

Gene realized "when people are left with no type of industry, things like clothes and tools return to a simple look because they learn to make do with what there is." The population of this dimension is hard-working and oppressed. Thus, he wanted to "make everything look like it was made from bits and pieces, beads, handicrafts, and items from trash heaps. There isn't much else available on this world." Gene claims influences from Ancient Chinese and Oceanic cultures also add to the books' unique visual appeal.

Jeph Loeb is confident that Gene's research and commitment to the series will ensure that, "everyone is going to be blown away with his art work. It's beyond anything that anyone has seen before with regards to what the future looks like." Because he wants readers to get a full view of this new world, Gene says that most things are shown on a grand scale and therefore call for a great amount of detail. "The challenge was to make this series as visually shocking and detailed as the Cyclops and Phoenix series and then push it even farther. It really had to be that much more."

As a result of Gene's intricate style and technique, Inker Andrew Pepoy claims that "it takes longer to ink than most projects. I usually work through one page in 4 hours but the double-page spread on pages 2 and 3 of the first issue took 25 hours alone. Unlike some artists though, Gene's attention to detail seems to be a part of the drawing. It really works and adds to the art." Andrew's own style of inking over Gene, using a brush where traditional technique calls for pen, further develops the art of the series and welcomes the reader into a unique view of the world Gene himself is also responsible for some of the inks on the series

So does all of this merit another regular X-title based on the further adventures of the time-traveling mutant and his Askani Clan? Don't hold your breath. Both Lisa Patrick and Scott Lobdell admit the concept has potential, but they agree it would take away from the mystery of the future provided by a series like **ASKANI'SON.** And although it is a story line already developed through past continuity, it promises to cater to new and experienced readers alike. In many ways, this type of limited series proves to be the best way to catch up on X-Men prophecies, see some X-characters in a unique context, and get a peek at the mutant outcasts of the future. Or is it the past? **Whatever.**

—Rob Piotrowski

X-Men

UNCANNY X-MEN #330

Scott Lobdell/Joe Madureira
Wolverine & Archangel get down & dirty as they continue their desperate search through New York's mystic underworld for the cure for Psylocke!
(Shipping 1/2/96)

STORM #2 OF 4

Foil-Stamped Cover
Marvel Select Format
Warren Ellis/Terry Dodson/Karl Story
Continuing Storm's own Marvel Select limited series! The secrets of Colossus' brother, Mikhail Rasputin, are revealed—including the fact that he's alive!
(Shipping 1/16/96)

CABLE #29

Jeph Loeb/Wilfred Santiago
Why is Blaquesmith withholding info concerning a certain mutant who has a bio-signature that matches Cable's? Writer Jeph (WOLVERINE/GAMBIT) Loeb leads all the x-fans into next month's Cable/X-Man meeting!
(Shipping 1/2/96)

X-MEN: ASKANI'SON #2 OF 4

Scott Lobdell/Gene Ha
THE SEQUEL TO THE ADVENTURES OF CYCLOPS & PHOENIX CONTINUES!
Dayspring (the boy who would be Cable) is the last hope of a devastated people. But can he lead them to glory with Stryfe & Apocalypse on the war path? Scott Lobdell & Gene Ha reunite to continue the story of the son of Cyclops in this Marvel Select limited series. (Note: this is a resolicit, all previous orders will be canceled.)
(Shipping 1/9/96)

GENERATION X #13

Scott Lobdell/Tbd
Part two of the throwdown with Emplate! Will he finish the war he started in GENERATION X #1? Plus: more on the mysterious past of Chamber!
(Shipping 1/9/96)

PSYLOCKE PRESS POSTER #216

Paul Lee
The X-Men's femme fatale leaps into battle a band of mercenary Ninja!
(Shipping 1/9/96)

PROFESSOR X & THE X-MEN #6

Fred Schiller/Jan Duursema
Magneto & his Brotherhood of Evil Mutants attack, and only the strange teenagers known as the X-Men can stop them! Continuing the re-telling of the X-Men legend for the next generation!
(Shipping 1/9/96)

X-FACTOR

Howard Mackie/Steve Epting/Al Milgrom
It's Forge vs. the Adversary! Meanwhile, the new line-up of X-Factor gathers: Mystique, Polaris, Shard, Wildchild—and Sabretooth!
(Shipping 1/9/96)

EXCALIBUR #95

Warren Ellis/Carlos Pacheco/Cam Smith
Continued from X-MAN #12! Young Nate vs. Excalibur! The team must bring down the X-Man without unleashing the psychic powers which could destroy Muir Island!
(Shipping 1/16/96)

X-FORCE #52

Jeph Loeb/Adam Pollina
Warpath & Boomer explore their developing powers and attitudes. Brought to you by Jeph (WOLVERINE/GAMBIT) Loeb & the always entertaining Adam Pollina.
(Shipping 1/23/96)

X-MEN ADVENTURES SEASON III #13

Ralph Macchio/Ben Herrera
"The Dark Phoenix Saga" concludes! It's the big, bad Imperial Guard vs. the X-Men! Will the mutants take down their friend—at any cost? Based on the hit cartoon.
(Shipping 1/9/96)

BISHOP TPB: MOUNTJOY CRISIS

John Ostrander/Carlos Pacheco/Cam Smith
Collected for the first time, the hit BISHOP limited series! This 96 page volume includes all four issues of the adventure that explored the enigmatic warrior and Mountjoy, the outlaw mutant he has sworn to take down. Take a look at the creative team and you'll know why this series was a best-seller.
(Shipping 1/30/96)

X-MAN #13

John Ostrander Tbd/Bud Larosa Luke Ross
In the wake of his encounter with EXCALIBUR, young Nate goes in search of Madeline Pryor. But will he find her—or someone far more sinister? Featuring a tale by John Ostrander, a resident of Wizard's "Top Ten Hottest Writers" list.
(Shipping 1/16/96)

X-MEN #50

Scott Lobdell/Andy Kubert
DOUBLE-SIZED ANNIVERSARY BLOW-OUT!
Gateway brings X-Factor's Polaris, Excalibur's Kitty, Generation X's Chamber & the mutants that started it all together to confront the threat that will plague the X-Men for the next 50 issues! Also available with clear, holographic, foil cover.
(Shipping 1/23/96)

X-MEN UNLIMITED #10

Mark Waid/Tbd
The "Age of Apocalypse" Beast strikes! It's our huggable, loveable blue-furred Beast vs. that nappy dark-furred Beast—and only one will rise from the tunnels! Man, things are getting hairy!
(Shipping 1/23/96)

WOLVERINE #99

Larry Hama/Adam Kubert
Is Wolverine getting his adamantium back? You think I'm just going to tell you? Get in line behind everybody else who's going to snag this lead-in to WOLVERINE #100!
(Shipping 1/23/96)

On the Chin

"The Sky Is Falling" and other less-than-groovy vibes

by Fabian Nicieza

Something happened to me between then and now. I got married. I had a kid. I got older. And I've become the stereotypical grouchy adult who invariably says, when faced with a change in the status quo that he does not like, "Why, when I was younger..."

Half the times I get terrified when I hear myself say that, the other half, well, I figure that maybe things have changed and not always for the better.

What came first, the chicken or the egg? When did a nation of doers become a land of whiners? When did a desire to learn turn into an expectation to be told? When did we lose the collective ability to think before we speak? And how does any of this relate to an article I've been asked to write for the first issue of Marvel's new self-flagellating magazine?

I've been involved with comic books for thirty years. I've been an industry professional for over ten years. I've seen creators come and go, staff people hired and fired (and in some cases, hired again). I've been a curious observer as two Editorial Regimes at Marvel were toppled. I've seen more new companies crop up and be anointed "the saviors of the industry" only to see them publish their wares and wither on the racks than I have fingers on my hands to count with I've sat in meetings where the concerns and desires of Editorial conflicted with those of Sales. I've listened to Retailers complain that the comics just "aren't the same" as they used to be when they were kids. I've seen Marvel turn into the Pac-Man of comic publishers, only to realize that maybe you should not wish, for you just might receive. I've watched as little by little, the need to know everything yesterday; the blinding lack of patience and protocol— change the way we do business (and not just on the part of the readers, but the distributors, the retailers, and the creators, as well)

I've tried body-surfing along the waves of the Internet, and just like going to the real beach, some waves you ride to glory, others you miss completely and a few buffet you about like a piece of driftwood.

I've seen lots of change and in my opinion, not all of those changes have been for the better. So what to do about it? Well, I'm a talker by nature (no kidding, really?), though for someone who must like to hear the sound of his own voice droning on as much as I do, I've continued to resist forums such as this one in which to voice my view. Columns such as this have certainly been offered to me several times over, but I've preferred not to make myself a self-designated "voice of the industry."

Why am I writing this now? Because I've gotten older and things have changed. To the point, I feel, where I needed to take any opportunity offered me to address that portion of the comics industry which might be out there listening. This might or might not pertain to you, whether you are a reader, professional, retailer, distributor, collector, hanger-on, wanna-be or never-was. What I have to say is pretty self-explanatory, I think..

GROW UP ALREADY, WILL YOU?!!

How can we do that, some of you might ask?

Here are five suggestions I would like you to tack on to your refrigerators tonight which, if used as a daily affirmation, might just help some of you accomplish that which I am asking of you (take into account, my bold-faced sentence does not apply to all of you, or even some of you or most of you — it only applies to you if you got upset by it)

HOW TO KEEP THE COMIC BOOK SKY FROM FALLING EVERY DAY

1) *If I do not have a personal relationship with a specific comic book creator, I will not make comments about his/her personality and/or personal life based only on my opinions of his/her work.*

I should strive to only criticize (constructively if possible) the creative endeavor itself, without criticizing the creator. This will apply to conversations I am having with my friends just as much as it does to letters I might send to the publishers or open discussions I might post on the computer chat services

While I'm at it, I will try, hard as it might be, to eschew the perpetuation of idle gossip and rumor-mongering, for it is not only unsavory, it is often hurtful to the people being discussed. I want to be a good human, and good humans don't purposely try to hurt others.

So no more of that, "Did you hear that Fabian and Bob Harras got into a fist-fight in the hallway at Marvel when he quit X-Men?" That example is especially noteworthy for two reasons in that: A) it disseminates misinformation about me (something none of you should be doing) and B) we all know I was fired anyway (besides, I could take Harras with my eyes closed and my hair tied behind my back).

That was just one example anyway. I'm sure lots of you folks have plenty of your own you could substitute in its place.

2) *(Fill in the Blank) Company is NOT the source of all EVIL in this world*

You choose your own personal demons here, just be aware that a Company exists solely in a capitalist society, for better or worse, to make money. Ka-Ching! A company is a self-perpetuating engine of greed. Accept that fact or move to Pluto, unless Communism, Socialism or a Dictatorship is a preferable option for you.

Oh, and another bug I've had up my butt is that line I always hear, "They publish too many books!" What is that supposed to mean? Does ABC have too many TV shows? Does Universal release too many movies? Does Berkley Publishing have too many paperbacks books? Here's a secret hint: Although they would love it if you do, NO comic book publisher EXPECTS you to buy all of their product

Retailers please ignore the above comment, since Order Forms and quantity of product is a part of your daily lives, the amount of titles a company produces can adversely affect you. Then again, it was YOUR choice to be a retailer, wasn't it?

3) *Readers: I will no longer buy any more comic books that I do not enjoy reading.*

Life is too short and times are too tough to be spending money on comic book or related products that do not entertain, enlighten or educate me. From now on, my long-standing collections be damned, I will only purchase that which I enjoy. Period. But, Fabe, what if the book gets good again —?

Ah-ah. Shush up, now.

You don't like it for — oh, let's say FOUR issues in a row — then DROP IT!

If we, as creators, produce four turkey issues straight, then we deserve to lose you as a customer.

4) *Creators: Do not bite the hand that feeds you!*

I've always been a really, REALLY big fan of taking a nibble here and there (and there and there), but I'm mighty bored by very loud-mouthed "voices of the industry" who perform monthly diatribes against (fill in the name of evil entity here) while they also know that a check from that company is in the mail and they will most certainly be cashing it as soon as they get home from their rubber-chicken banquet "speech."

Having worked from within to try and effect positive changes for so long, both for Marvel and for the industry, I certainly understand the desire to try and improve our collective lots in life (and now that I'm not within anymore, I sadly realize that I accomplished less than nothing for all my efforts). I guess that for me, though, it goes back to that doer/whiner thing. Try less talking about the problems and more fixing of them!

5) *For God's sake, can we all try being just a little more POSITIVE about the industry we're in?*

I know the economy is tough. I know that Pac-Man is changing our decade-long comfort zone we'd all felt happy with.

I know there're too many super hero books out there (well, try Stray Bullets, Hellboy, Two Gun Kid, Preacher, Barbie, etc., etc., etc.).

I know the comics aren't as good as they were when we were kids (that's just a bone I'm throwing out to you).

I know that whole clone-thing has made every single comic book you own now worthless.

I know that (fill in the name of any Editor here) is the Anti-Christ.

And I know one other thing... the most important thing of all...

... it all beats digging ditches.

Things could be worse.

EDITOR'S NOTE. THE VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY FABIAN DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS AND OPINIONS OF THIS MAGAZINE OR ITS PUBLISHER, BUT THEY ARE KINDA FUN, AREN'T THEY?

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